Chaos and Pain

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ELITE POWERLIFTING

JAMIE LEWIS

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Edited by: Krishtha P. Spuglio
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CONTENTS

Allow Me To Preface Your Face 4
Those Who Cannot Do, Teach? 6
  What You Can Feel Free To Learn From Others 7
The Department of Strategery 8
The Lifts, In All Of Their Glory 9
  Stop Bitching and Start Benching 9
    Presenting… The Bench Form Of The Greats! 13
  The Bench Routines of the Greats 19
    Doug Young 19
    Rick Weil 22
    Jennifer Thompson 26
    Ted Arcidi 29
    Jeremy Hoornstra 31
    Scot Mendelson 33
    Ken Fantano 36
    Bev Francis 38
    Ken Lain 40
    Ed Coan 43
    Jim Williams 45
    Changes Worth Making To Your Bench Routine 48
    Bench Press Support Staff Worth A Shit 50
    Other Important Considerations for the Bench 56
Making Your Deadlift Even More Deadly 59
  There Will Be Fucking Murders 61
    How to select the perfect stance for you 62
  The Deadlift Programs of the Greats 70
    Lamar Gant 70
    Konstantin Konstantinovs 72
    Bob Peoples 74

Benedikt Magnusson 75
Rickey Dale Crain....77
John Kuc 79
Ed Coan 81
Julia Zaugolova 83
Tools To Make Your Deadlift Even More Deadly 86
My Deadliest Deadlift Routines 86
The Deadliest Assistance Movements 88
Filling in the Rest of the Blanks on the Deadlift 94
Basic Tips On The Deadlift Itself 95
A Note On The Attached Programs 97
Squatting Like You're The CEO of the Paper Street Soap Company 98
The Squat Form Of The Greats 100
Squatting Like A Pro....108
The Squat Programs of the Greats....109
Idalberto Aranda 109
"Mad" Mike Kuhns 111
Andrey Belyaev 113
Sam Byrd 116
Paul Anderson 118
Phil "Squatzilla" Harrington 120
"Captain" Kirk Karwoski 122
Mikhail Koklyaev....124
My Method For Building a Badass Squat 126
Persistence 127
Frequency and Intensity....128
If You Don't Know Squat, You Need These Routines 130
Bringing Assistants Into The Rack....132
Squat Variants You Should Be Doing....133
The Jump Squat....133
The Front Squat....134

  Basic Tips on the Squat Itself 136
Becoming Whole 139
    A Word About Special Snowflake Syndrome and Sis Bros 141
  Diet 142
  Mental 145
Destroy The Opposition Programs 150
  Destroy The Opposition For Beginners 150
  Destroy The Opposition For Intermediate Deadlift Specialists 153
  Destroy The Opposition For Advanced Deadlift Specialists 155
  Destroy The Opposition For Intermediate Squat Specialists 159
  Destroy The Opposition For Advanced Squat Specialists 162
Works Cited 165
    Unedited Andrey Belyaev *Squat Routine* 171

ALLOW ME TO PREFACE YOUR FACE

In the grand scheme of history and in strength sports in general, powerlifting is an incredibly new sport. Man has been testing his strength against man since time immemorial, as testing one's strength against friends, family, and enemies alike helps determine your place in the general hierarchy, establishes one's physical dominance, and provides a ready benchmark against which people can gauge their physical mettle. Most strength sports today haven't required much in the way of technological innovation to enable competition. Powerlifting, however, has. Prior to the advent of the squat rack and the bench press, the only powerlift in which people typically competed was the deadlift. The reason for this should be obvious, as all the deadlift requires is a barbell and a bit of open space. Prior to the advent of the squat rack, squats were typically performed only when the weight had been cleaned or continental'ed to the shoulders, or were performed in a Steinborn squat. I'll cover the Steinborn squat later, but sufficed to say, the exercise is an unmitigated bitch, and not really anything most people would ever attempt with a heavy weight. Likewise, the closest approximation to a bench press was the pullover and press, which I'll also detail later as well, though that eventually became little more than a contortionist act and weird hip-thrusting belly lift. In other words, it was far better suited to a party trick at an orgy filled with circus fat men and women than it was a lifting platform.

Owing to this need for technological innovation, powerlifting didn't really have legs as a sport until the 1950s, and even then it was really only a British and American sport. Initially, the three powerlifts were really just considered to be "odd lifts"— the type of shit you and your buddies would get together and try out on a Saturday afternoon before going to drink your faces off and engage in random acts of wanton sexuality. Eventually, Bob Hoffman, the founder of York barbell, took an interest in the lifts, probably to piss off his nemesis Joe Weider. Hoffman was instrumental, then, in financing the US Olympic weightlifting team's success through the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, and was the godfather of powerlifting. Initially, the deadlift wasn't included in these competitions, and powerlifting was actually what most people refer to "power sports" competitions today— the strict curl, bench press, and squat. By the time the first world championships were held in the 1970s, the deadlift had replaced the curl, and powerlifting began to resemble its current incarnation, though there was a total lack of standardization in rules that made comparisons of performances difficult. It wasn't until the mid to late 1970s that the rules were truly standardized for the sport, making powerlifting essentially a 40 year old sport.

Due in large part, I suppose, to the fact that powerlifting is still in its infancy, there appears to be a lot of dispute about what is "correct" in terms of training for meets. A lot of the programs about which you'll read are the products of people who haven't been successful in the sport, and still others are simply adaptations of Olympic weightlifting programs, which is somewhat comical given that the two sports bear little relation to one another— one is a demonstration of speed, agility, and flexibility in combination with strength, whereas the other is the truest test of raw, brute strength yet devised by man. I'm giving you this background because it occurs to me that most people have no fucking clue why they do what they do— they simply do it because it's what everyone else is doing. If you haven't noticed yet, just about everyone you meet is a half-retarded asshole, and they probably know less than you do. As such, there's not a reason in the fucking world you should follow in their footsteps unless you're criminally lazy, or because you just love sucking at things. Given what I've seen at powerlifting meets, I'm guessing it's a combination of the two.

Well, fuckers, it's time to wake the fuck up, get your heads out of your asses, and start kicking ass in powerlifting. The only thing that's stopping you at this point is you.

THOSE WHO CANNOT DO TEACH?

This is one of the most horrifying adages I've ever read, and I could not possibly understand why it's so widely accepted. I suppose that it makes sense in the United States, where the average score for aspiring teachers on the SAT is 389, but I fail to understand why people accept this (Sowell 335). Why the fuck would you want to be led by someone who cannot personally display a basic aptitude for the thing they're teaching you? I would no more accept strength training instruction from a fat, weak guy than I would English instruction from one of the aforementioned education majors. One line of reasoning you'll commonly see for taking strength instruction from weak people goes something like this, "I know a lot of stupid motherfuckers who are strong, but I would rather take instruction from someone who can tell me why I'm doing what I'm doing." If you're nodding your head in agreement, fucking stop it— your argument defies logic. If it's possible for a knuckle-dragging dullard to get criminally strong with no real kinesthetic understanding or background in physiology, it would stand to reason that you what you need is motivation, not knowledge. Tookie Williams, for instance, the founder and leader of the Crips street gang, was a fucking moron, but he was huge. His secret? He's smoke angel dust or PCP before he'd lift weights, then lift with the most reckless abandon of anyone in history since Rowdy Roddy Piper hung up his cocaine straw and got fat. Knowledge about lifting is nothing without a burning desire to move heavy weight, and the experience of having put that desire into practice successfully is what is needed to be a good coach. Luckily, I can provide you with the latter, because I am so good at powerlifting I make other people abandon the sport altogether, and I'm so fucking smart I make smart people feel retarded. Thus, you can sit back and relax, because you're about to drink from fire hose of knowledge that will make every previous treatment on the subject of powerlifting look like one of those shitty drinking fountains wherein the water barely dribbles out and you have to lap it up like a Chihuahua by comparison. In case you bought this ebook on the recommendations of someone else and have no idea who I am, my name is Jamie Lewis, and only one person in history has outlifted me at 181 lbs without knees wraps. Thus far, my best lifts at that weight at the time of publishing are a 633lb squat, 369 bench, and a 661 deadlift, wearing nothing more than knee sleeves and a belt. That puts me 17 lbs off a world record in the squat set in 1974, and 39 lbs off the record total, in spite of the fact that I only started competing in full powerlifting meets within the last two years. In that time, I've set the raw record in the APF in the squat and total and posted the only 600 lb+ wrapless squats at 181 since the record was set. Lest you then question my academic credentials, I've got two MBAs and an undergraduate degree in history. Thus, I am the perfect storm in terms of disseminating information on powerlifting— I know the science behind what I do and put my knowledge into brutal, unrelenting, dominant action.

WHAT YOU CAN FEEL FREE TO LEARN FROM OTHERS

One thing I have never claimed to be is a teacher to raw beginners in strength sports. Quite frankly, it's a waste of time. Raw beginners can learn the basics of lifting anywhere. To wit, I learned how to do all of the basic movements by looking at a chart on the wall in my high school weight room and watching other people lift. It's just that simple. For that reason, you will not find innumerable diagrams explaining how to do shit you should probably already know how to do. I will explain the more esoteric exercises, but you should already know the basics. If you don't, there are literally millions of resources at your fingertips that will explain and demonstrate basic movements like the squat and the deadlift. I've no interest in reinventing the wheel, and I'm fairly certain the lot of you would prefer that I spend my time focusing on the more important shit than essentially attempting to reteach you how to read. You know the old adage about how you can give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day, or you could teach him to fish and feed him for a lifetime? I'm basically going to teach you people to fish by chumming shark infested waters and throwing you in with a life jacket and a Bowie knife. It's time to get awesome or die trying.

THE DEPARTMENT OF STRATEGERY

Before you charge out into the great, wide world with blood in your eyes and dominance of powerlifting on your mind, you're going to have to engage in a bit of strategery. If you look at the best lifters in history, they all had one of the two big movements as their pet lift, and they specialized in it to achieve total dominance in the sport. Ed Coan and John Kuc focused on the deadlift, for instance, while Fred Hatfield and Kirk Karwoski relied on the squat to get their totals up. Recently, we've had guys like Andy Bolton and Konstantin Konstantinovs blow people away with their deads and put in passable performances on the squat, while guys like Sam Byrd and myself use the squat for dominance. You're not going to be insanely dominant in both— there's just no way to pull it off. As such, you should focus on one and beat the living hell out of it, and the strength you build training your specialization will carryover into the other lift enough to allow you to embarrass your competition. Clearly, a passable bench is important as well, but it's rare that someone has a bench so impressive that he or she can pull out enough ahead to clearly establish himself or herself as the dominant lifter. The squat and the deadlift, being the bigger lifts, are going to need to be the focus of your training to ensure victory. Thus, treat this as a Choose Your Own Adventure book and pick one on which to focus.

THE LIFTS IN ALL OF THEIR GLORY

STOP BITCHING AND START BENCHING

As I mentioned in the introduction, the bench press is a remarkably modern lift. Lifters of the late 19th and early 20th century lacked an apparatus on which they could bench- unfortunately, Da Vinci and his fellow savants stuck to devising things that would allow Venetians to kill people with only the tiny bit of effort Italians are capable of exerting in war, and American scientists were busy figuring out electricity, while everyone else pretty much sat around with their thumbs up their asses praying the Americans would invent the modern world so they could stop sleeping in manure. Thus, it was only after automobiles and electricity and computers and space flight were in full swing before anyone turned their big brain to lifting and decided to add uprights to a sturdy bench to hold a barbell.

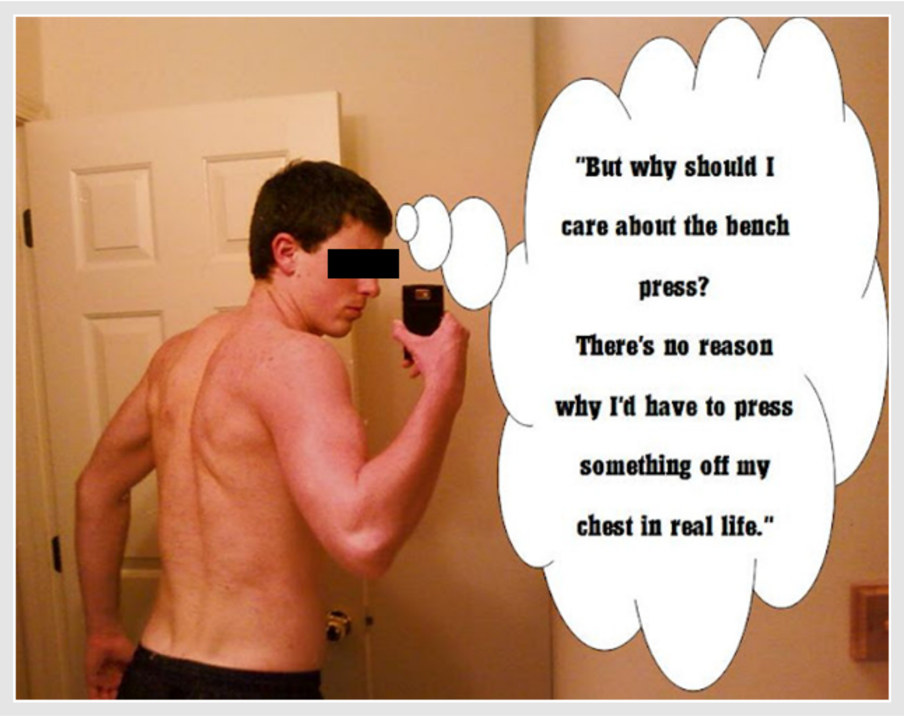
Prior to that invention, you had two options if you wanted pectoral hypertrophy- parallel bar dips or the predecessor to the bench press, the pullover and press. For this, the lifter would lie on his back on the ground and do a barbell pullover, then press the bar from his chest. This was, at least initially, a strict lift, and George Hackenschmidt simplified it a bit by using plates large enough that he could simple roll the weight into place and then do what you and I would refer to as a "floor press", setting the record at 361 lbs. lifting in that fashion in 1898 (Gentle). Not to be outdone, Arthur Saxon eventually began doing what amounted to a back bridge to press more weight, and ended up hitting 386 for a single. The lift then continued to evolve as lifters would arch their bodies explosively into the bar to give it momentum, at which point it became the "belly toss" of which you'll occasionally read. The belly toss was eventually banned for the reason I mentioned earlier- it had become a contortionist act. One lifter, Billy Lilly, eventually slow-bridged 484 lbs. to arms length to his "extreme flexibility" (Katterle), giving him what was nearly a three times bodyweight pullover and press (Ibid). As such, Bob

Hoffman made a move to get that form banned, and the lift languished in the shadows as people argued over the proper execution of the modern lift in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In fact, the exercise didn't gain wide acceptance as a competition lift until Joe Weider promoted the modern bench press as "the greatest exercise of all" in his magazines in 1957 (Gentle), four years after Doug Helpburn set an unofficial record in the lift with a paused 502 lb. bench press.

Thus, the bench press has been the most maligned and simultaneously ballyhooed exercise on the planet since its invention, and the invention of its predecessor. I've taken a steaming shit on it over the years for one reason— I fucking suck at it. I'm fairly certain that is the reason most people trash talk the bench— it sucks to be so bad at the one exercise virtually everyone does. As such, you simply sidestep the conversation by decrying it as a pointless and useless feat of strength fit for naught but bodybuilders and sundry gym dilettantes. In the end, however, the people who yell the loudest about the uselessness of the bench press are usually the same guys masturbating to it like a pedophile at a McDonald's PlayPlace. They're looking at great benchers in the gym with the jealousy generally reserved for flat chested gold diggers when they spot a big-tittied woman working a guy with an AMEX Black. They hate the fuck out of themselves for sucking at the lift but not enough to get fucking good at it, so they make excuses not to do so. It's time, however, for that shit to end— everyone needs to sack the fuck up and admit that if it's good enough for Olympic weightlifting phenom Dmitri Klokov, it's damn sure good enough for them.

I suppose a great deal of most peoples' frustration stems from the fact that benching seems to come easy to some and not to others. I've come to the realization, however, that like everything else in the gym, big weights come to those who break their asses for them. If you suck at benching, it's your own fucking fault. I was a disgrace to my lineage at the bench press until what I thought was a shoulder injury (which ended up just being knotting) forced me to change my bench press style to the reverse grip, a style only the inimitable Anthony Clark ever used with success in competition. I worked hard at learning the new form and experimenting with it because I had to, and I've become considerably less of an embarrassment to family and friends at the bench since I did so. THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU SHOULD START REVERSE GRIPPING. That is not my point. Instead, you should 1) confirm that a suspected rotator cuff injury isn't simply knotting in your biceps at the insertion point, and 2) experiment with every part of the bench press to ensure that your form is optimal. Blindly following the recommendations of a stranger will only serve to remove thoughtfulness from your training, and if you're simply going to be a mindless automaton, you might as well sit in from your computer and play Farmville until a comet smashes into your house and wipes your shame from the Earth.

You're left, then, with the task of re-examining every single facet of your bench press if it is lagging, including your grip width, your elbow flare, your arch, your foot placement, the bar path, the strike point on your body, the assistance exercises you do, and the number of times per week you train the lift and accessories. Over the last year, I've played with every possible permutation of my new form and frequency to arrive at what I think works best for me, and it's nothing whatsoever like 1) people would generally suggest, or 2) what I started with. Thus, this is one more instance wherein you'll stop taking advice from every half-assed guru on the planet and fucking figure it out for yourself. Know which form is the right form? The form that gets white-lighted at a meet and allows you to move the most weight. If your current form fails to meet either of those criteria, you're fucking up.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"But why should I care about the bench press? There's no reason why I'd have to press something off my chest in real life."

I'm glad you asked, nameless moron who makes idiotic statements in public forums. Nice back, by the way. Allow me to elucidate all of the reasons you should get good at the bench press.

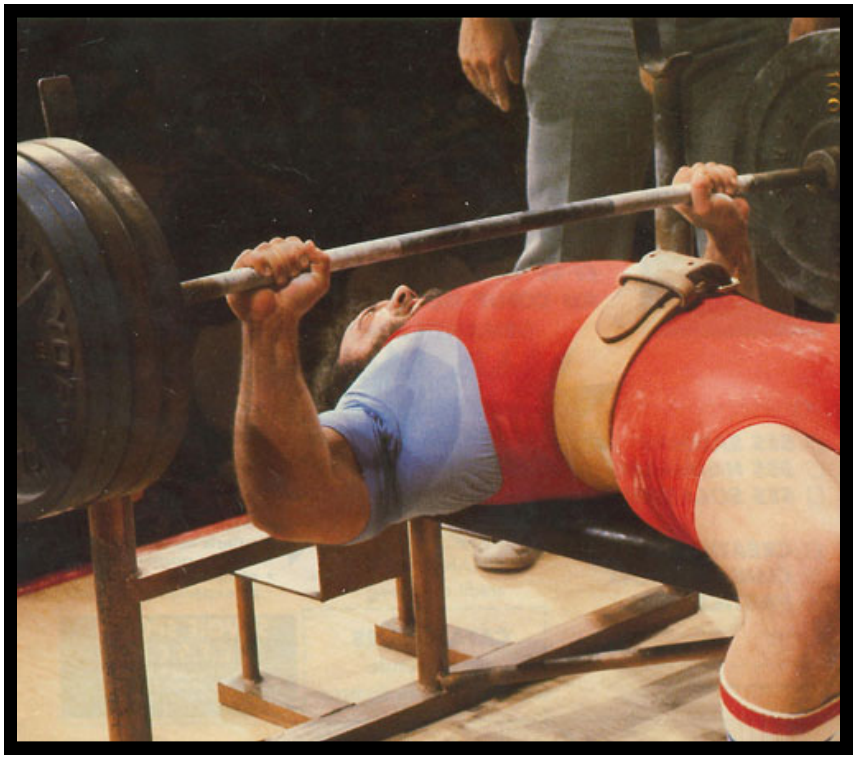
You should bench because:

- **Like it or not, the bench press is one of the most basic standards of measure for physical strength in the gym**. It's a universally accepted measure of upper body strength for lay people and lifters alike, and it's consequently utilized everywhere you go, from the grocery store checkout line (I'm constantly asked by customers and employees how much I bench) to the NFL Combine to the gym. Thus, it doesn't fucking matter what any pencil-necked pussy on a message board thinks about the efficacy of this measure— it's the standard. Refusing to adhere to the standard would be like trying to pay for your Jamba Juice with back issues of Hustler— no matter how much better a measure of personal wealth you might think they are, you're fucking wrong.
- **The bench press is an event in one of the three most popular strength sports in the Western world**. Sucking at it limits your ability to prove your mettle and compete in competitive sports that don't involve stupid pants played by people who are waiting to die. (For those amongst you who are confused by that sentence, I'm referring to golf. Golf courses are nothing more than waiting rooms for people ready to die.)
- **Sucking at the bench press is generally evidence that you're either an average woman or are considering becoming one**. It is, again, the most accepted measure of upper body strength, and upper body strength is associated with manliness. If you are a woman, consider this— kicking ass at an upper body lift like the bench makes you pretty much the top of the fucking food chain. Case in point: 132 lb. natural female powerlifter Jennifer Thompson has benched 315 in a non-sanctioned meet, raw. That sound you're hearing is thousands of guys violently opening kitchen drawers in search of anything sharp with which to slit their wrists. Remember, fellas— horizontal's a bullshit cry for help. You want to go down the road, rather than across the street, if you want to get the job done right.
- **Putting aside the necessity of your suicide if you're getting outlifted by a tiny female, benching is a good idea irrespective of your strength level or your gender**. You're read a lot of diatribes by people so self-important they make Chuck Palahniuk seem self-effacing by comparison wherein they decry the bench press as useless, but they're merely doing so to excuse their shit performance at that lift. There are plenty of instances wherein you need to have the brutal strength necessary to violently shove objects away from your chest— never mind shit falling on you or holding up the car while someone changes a tire, fellas. Having a strong chest, shoulders, and triceps means you will fuck better. If you cannot envision how this is possible, you're either a virgin or retarded. In either case, just focus on the aforementioned reasons.

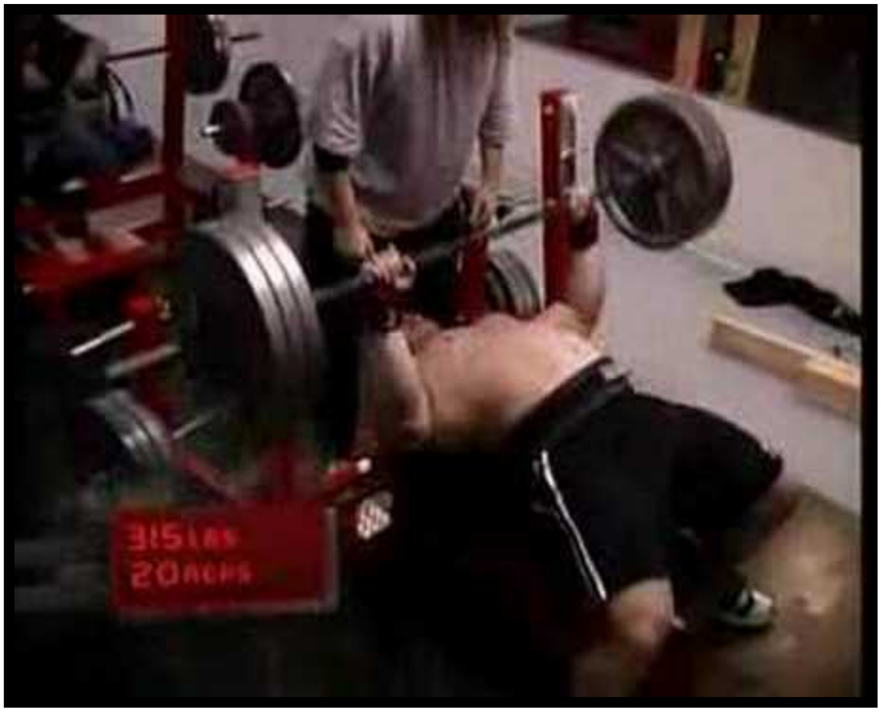
- **If that wasn't a poignant enough point, consider this— Arnold Schwarzenegger had a huge chest, and everyone reveres Arnold**. The bench press will give you a better developed chest, just like Arnold. Arnold benched often and he benched heavy (he hit 540 lbs at one point). His physique is renowned as the benchmark by which everyone gauges their own physique, even in an era where he couldn't get his pro card in a natural meet. Therefore, benching would be a good idea, if for no other reason than Ahnold says so.

Now that we've got that ridiculousness out of the way, I'll address the fact that there is no universally perfect bench press form, no matter what anyone fucking tells you. If anyone argues, treat them as you would any noisome blight and cave that fuckwit's head in with a rock or hammer.

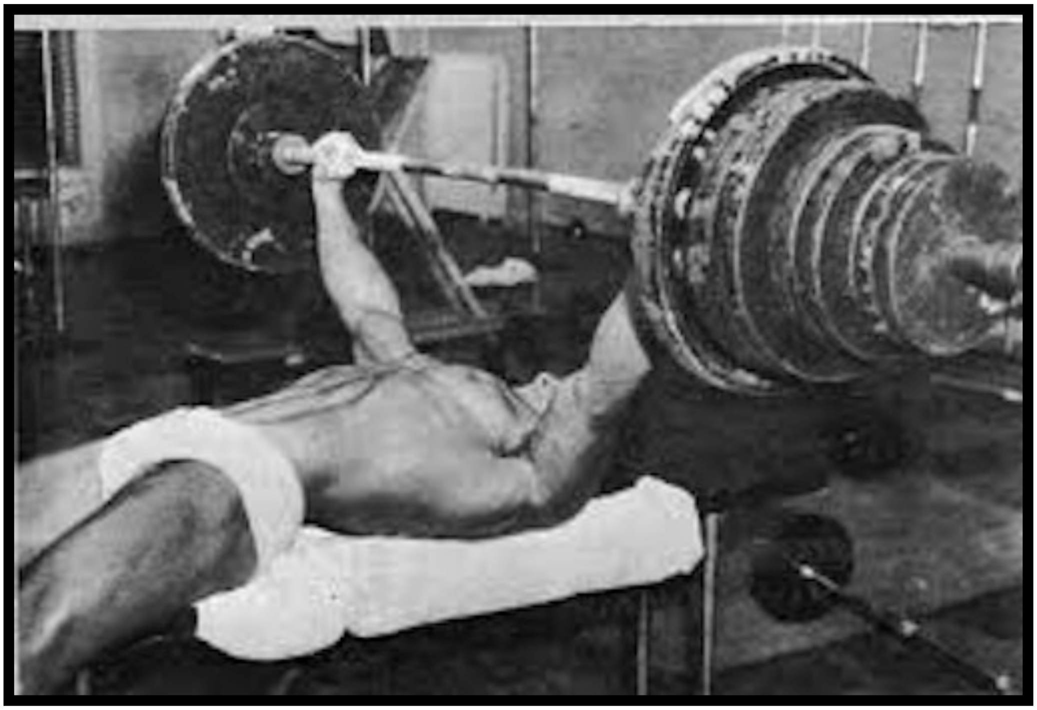
PRESENTING... THE BENCH FORM OF THE GREATS!



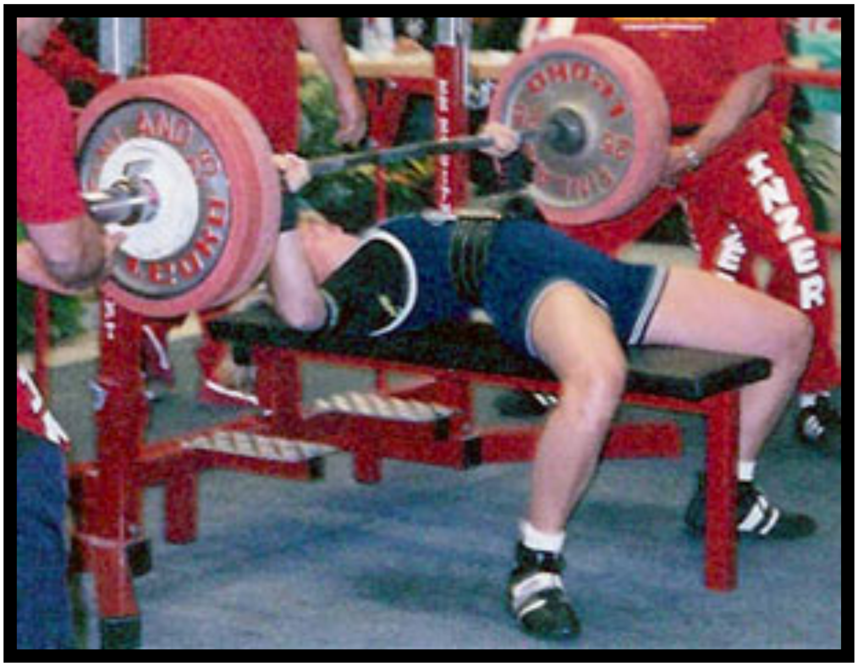
Ted Arcidi- Virtually flat back, wide grip, elbows flared feet away from bench and slightly wide. Ted was the first person to officially bench 700 lbs, and was an all-around bad motherfucker at the bench.



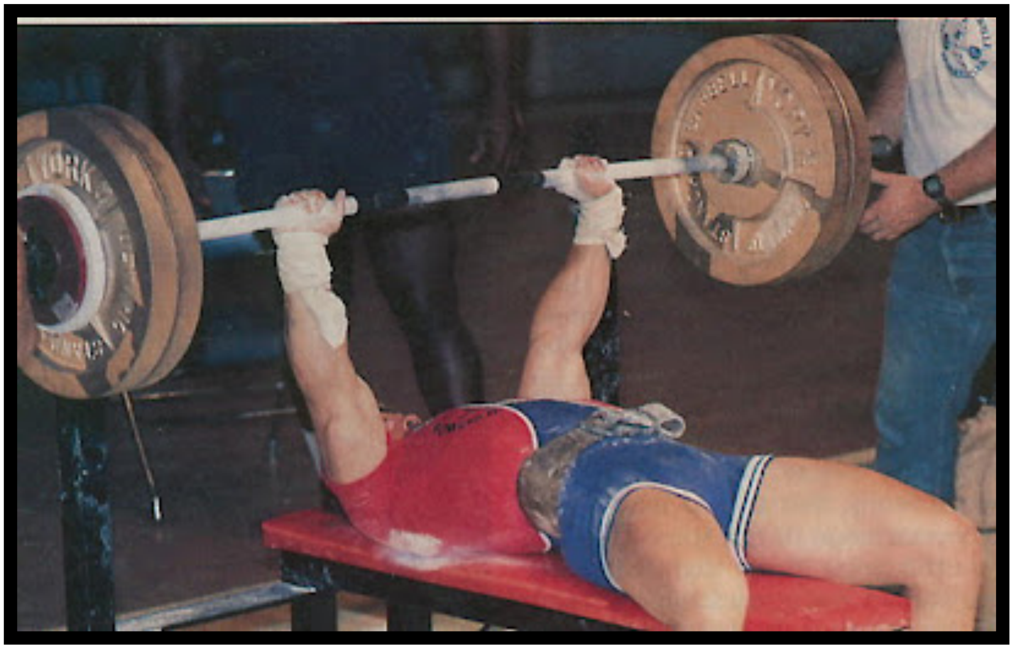
Ryan Kennelly- Hard arch, fairly close grip, elbows in, feet a little tucked. He benched 1074 shirted and at least 650 raw.



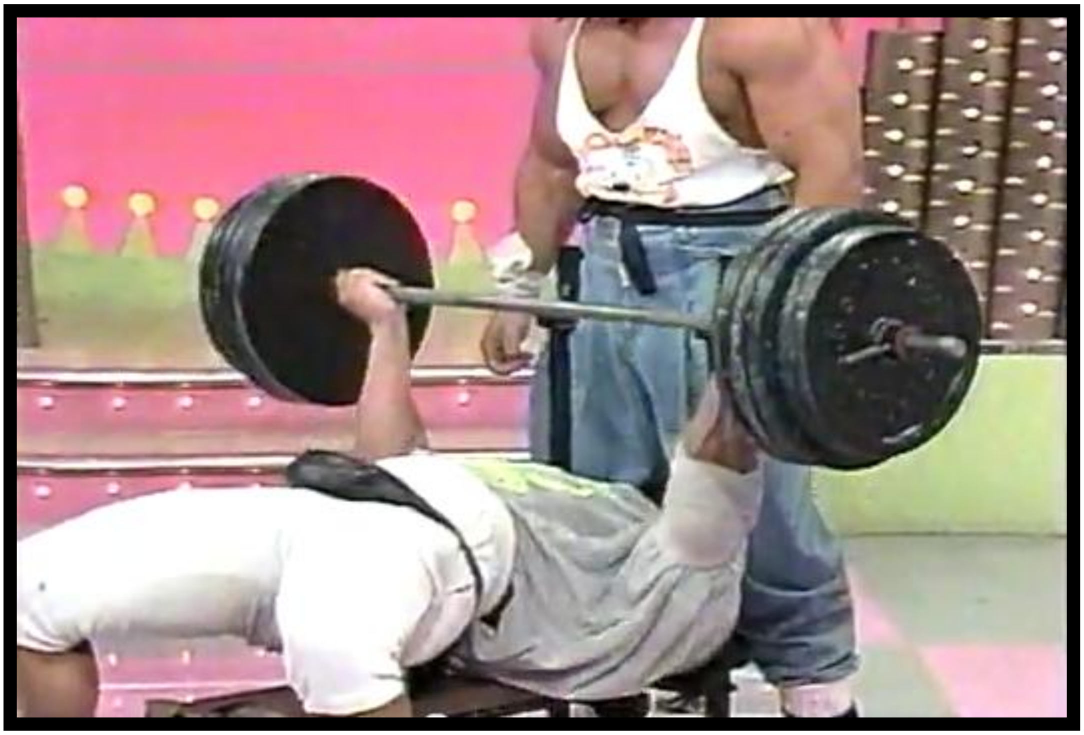
Marvin Eder- Practically a snatch grip, completely flat back, and legs nearly straight. Eder benched 515 at 203 lbs in a time when he had to have someone hand him the bar because bench pressing benches were rare.



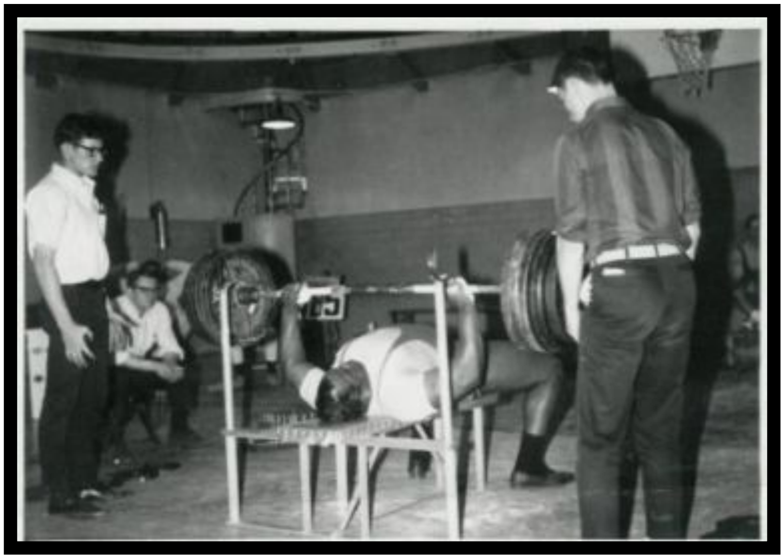
Jennifer Thompson- Wide grip, elbows flared, hard arch, wide, tucked feet. She benched 297.5 at 132, fellas, and 315 at an unsanctioned meet.



Rick Weil- Close grip, elbows flared, back totally flat. He holds world records at 165 and 181 that have stood for over 25 years, in spite of the fact that he's doing everything "wrong" by most internet gurus' standards.



The Barbarian Brothers- Ultra wide reverse grip, hard arch, wide foot placement. In the video from which I snagged this still, one of them hits 200kg for 5 bounced reps, and they both had 500+ lb benches for singles. Before you talk shit about their form, consider the fact that none of you could get within shouting distance of that feat, with any form and the gear in the world.

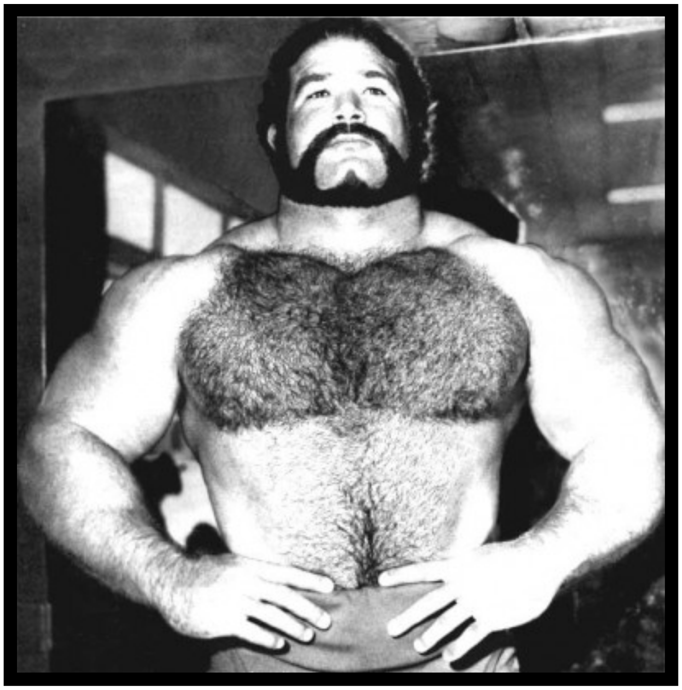


Big Jim Williams- Fairly wide grip, super flared elbows, flat feet and a close stance, with a very low arch.

I think at this point we've established fairly concretely that there is no standard by which you should gauge your form in the bench press, and a fairly obvious reason why I won't be including any kind of form tutorial within these pages. Provided you get three white lights in a meet, whichever form you use to move the most weight is the best form. No two people are built exactly alike, and there are so many factors that come into play (forearm vs. upper arm length, position of muscular insertions, tendon and ligament strength, muscular imbalances, past injuries) that no one can do more than offer passive suggestions about your form after seeing you bench. That is not to say that you should post a form check video online and take advice from idiots on the internet— I'm referring to advice from knowledgeable people, perhaps at a meet. Additionally, deviation from the standard from about which you read in the training manuals du jour and on the internet extends beyond the setup and execution of the competition bench. The greatest benchers of all time have wildly different routines and styles of execution of the bench itself in training. Some of the best benchers I know, for instance, train with a touch-and-go method and the occasional massive single bounced off their sternum. This includes two guys I know who bench over 500 and incline in the mid 400s but don't compete because they have no interest.

[Side note: It's been said before by people with more time in the gym than even I have, and it's absolutely true— the strongest people on Earth do not compete. I have no idea why this is the case, but I've seen some insane lifts in the gym that have never been duplicated on the platform by anyone, and the people performing them were so strong that they had no idea they were unofficially breaking world records as a regular part of their workouts. For instance, the chick in the pic above regularly did doubles with 335 on the squat at a bodyweight of around 135, and the record in that class currently stands at 330. Neither of us had any idea what the record was, and her performance as so commonplace that we never gave it a thought. As such, she never competed in a full meet, and is remarkably nonplussed at the fact that she could have held a world record in powerlifting.]

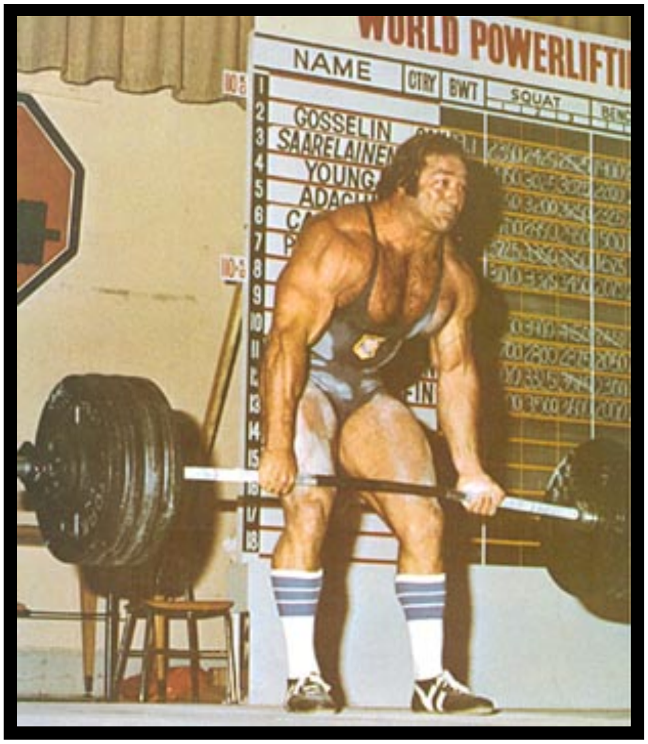
Additionally, the aforementioned benching duo do all of their rep work with partials, basically doing bottom-half reps throughout. This does not, however, prevent them from putting up big numbers when they try paused benches. For myself, like Ken Fantano, I have to practice the paused bench to be good at it. If I practice touch and go in the gym, my form breaks down, and I then lose the tightness I need to move big weights. Other guys seem to find that the looser form yields greater strength when applied to strict form. I could go on, but I think at this point it should be fairly apparent to those of you with nervous systems more complex than that of a starfish that there is no one golden bench press technique or routine, and that anyone who claims to know of one is a fucking liar worthy of a full-on Islamic stoning.



Bench press badass (he benched 545 at 242 in competition with 3 broken ribs) Doug Young says, "Stop making excuses and go bench, pussy. Just know you'll never have chest hair like this."

THE BENCH ROUTINES OF THE GREATS

There are many ways to skin a cat, and the bench press is absolutely no exception. Given the fact that many of you were shamed into depression with the news that a 130 lb girl out-benches you, I was initially planning to start with her and work our way through some of the greats. Instead, I'm going to start with Rick Weil, who's got a lengthy but really insightful look at the bench press and methods for fixing failed attempts based on the part of the lift in which you fail. Before I do, however, I'll mention that I noticed two striking similarities between the approaches of the two lifters I will outline— one, they don't seem to be overly preoccupied with limiting their volume, and two, many of them have backgrounds in bodybuilding. I suppose that should come as no surprise, given that bodybuilders often list chest and arms as their favorite body parts to lift, but it's worth noting for those of you who eschew either or both. After you drink in the goodness that's next perhaps you should consider the possibility that you're not doing enough volume or enough variety for your chest and arms to facilitate an optimal bench press. I'm sure that news is about as welcome as the teeth of a bath salt smoking homeless fucker on your cheek, but after reviewing the following programs and checking out their chest and arm development, you will most likely agree.



Doug Young

Suspend your incredulity for a moment and indulge me— the story goes, according to powerlifting historian Terry Todd, that Doug Young actually started powerlifting after getting teased by his coworkers for being fat and making a subsequent bet to lose weight thereafter. After cutting to 178 from 240 in two months, Young benched 305 the day of his weigh-in. Six months later, he stepped on the scale at 260 and benched a completely ridiculous 540. That's right— the catalyst for Young becoming one of the greatest powerlifters of all time was none other than one of those retarded intra-office Biggest Loser competitions. This would be akin to Red Baron joining the German Army after winning a paper airplane design competition. To say the man was a freak doesn't do him justice— he's something else altogether. He eventually benched 612, raw, and posted a total of 2017 lbs. at 242 (Todd, Texas USPF) in spite of the fact that he infrequently and grudgingly practiced the other two lifts. His program was just as ridiculous as his story. Every other day he did the same program, varying it only with the occasional inclusion of doubles instead of singles if he was too sore (Todd).

Bench Press (32-inch grip)
135 x 10
225 x 8
315 x 6
405 x 2
455 x 2
500 x 2
550 x 2
570 x 1

Bench Press (22-inch grip)
405 x 10

Bench Press (36-inch grip)
380 x 10

Triceps Press (which I assume is a pushdown)
225 x 6 for 4 sets

Young also utilized a competition prep routine for full meets in which he wanted to go for a big total. For the first three weeks of this program, he switches between the program above and the one below. Each of them is done once a week, so he's dropping his total benching volume to two days a week to incorporate other shit. To say he was singularly focused on the bench would be a ridiculous understatement— he makes modern day bench bros look like lazy, shiftless, non-benching layabouts by comparison.

Bench Press (32-inch grip)
135 x10
225 x 8
315 x 6
405 x 2
455 x 2
500 x 2
530 x 3 for 5 sets

Bench Press (22-inch grip)
405 x 10

Bench Press (36-inch grip)
380 x 10

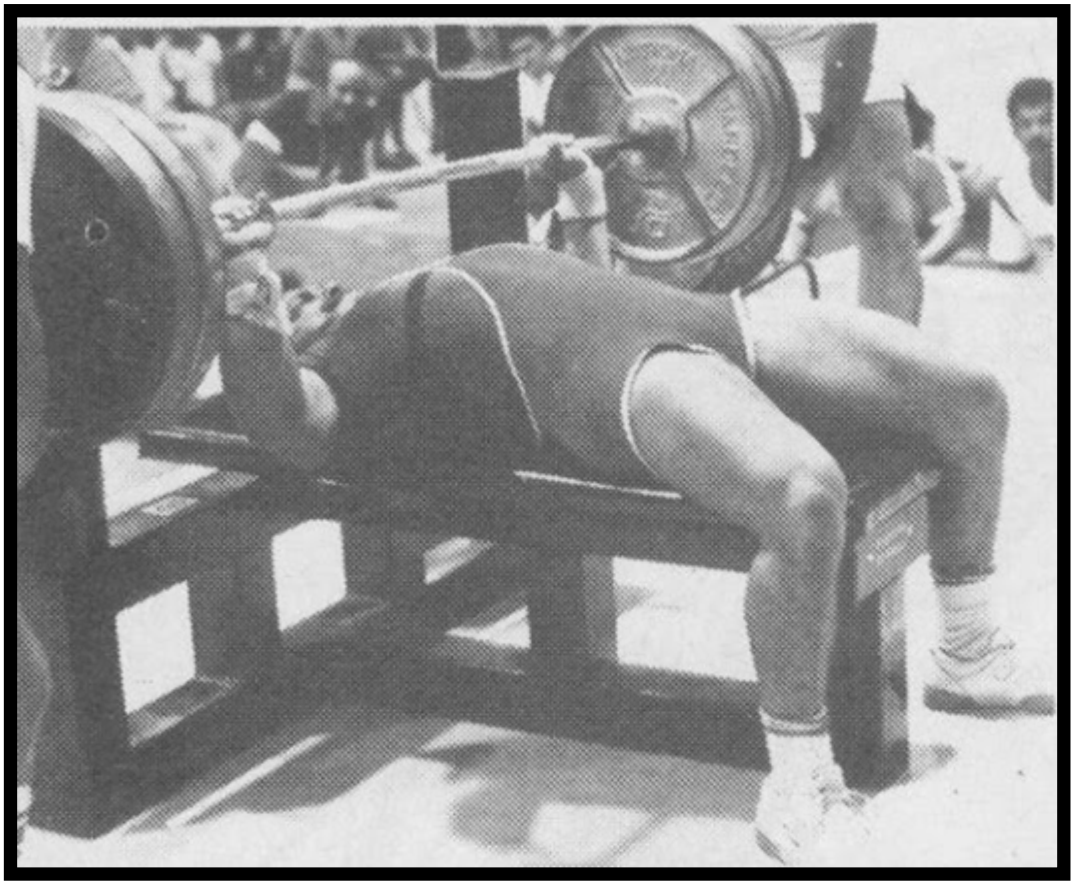
Triceps Press
225 x 6, 4 sets

If you're questioning his percentages, the weights listed above are calculated using his 6 rep max over four sets. If that wasn't weird enough, his percentages don't appear to have any fucking relation to one another, as he attempted to keep his 5 sets of 3 about 50 pounds higher than his 4 sets of 6, on which he used 480. Thus, he was doing 4x6 with the above poundages are figured on the basis of a top weight in his alternate program of 4 heavy sets of 6 with 480 pounds. He attempts to keep his 5 sets of 3 about 50 pounds higher than his 4 sets of 6. 480 is about 80% of his eventual best competition bench of 612, and 530 is 82% of his 1RM. Given that the standard for 3 rep sets seems to be 90%, this would point to the fact that a workout rigidly based on percentages is definitely not going to work for everyone.

In the last 5 workouts prior to a meet, Young modified his routine slightly. He'd use the 5 sets of 3 program for the first three sessions, then cut back on his reps in his final two workouts to 5 sets of 2 reps. The last two workouts would then look like this:

Bench Press (32-inch grip)
135 x 10
225 x 8
315 x 6
405 x 2
455 x 2
500 x 2
550 x 2 for 5 sets (90% of his 1RM) [He'd attempt to get 3 or 4 reps on the last two sets.]

He'd stop training on Tuesday or Wednesday for a Saturday meet, and would be mixing in limited and infrequent (once a week) squat and deadlift workouts consisting almost exclusively of singles.



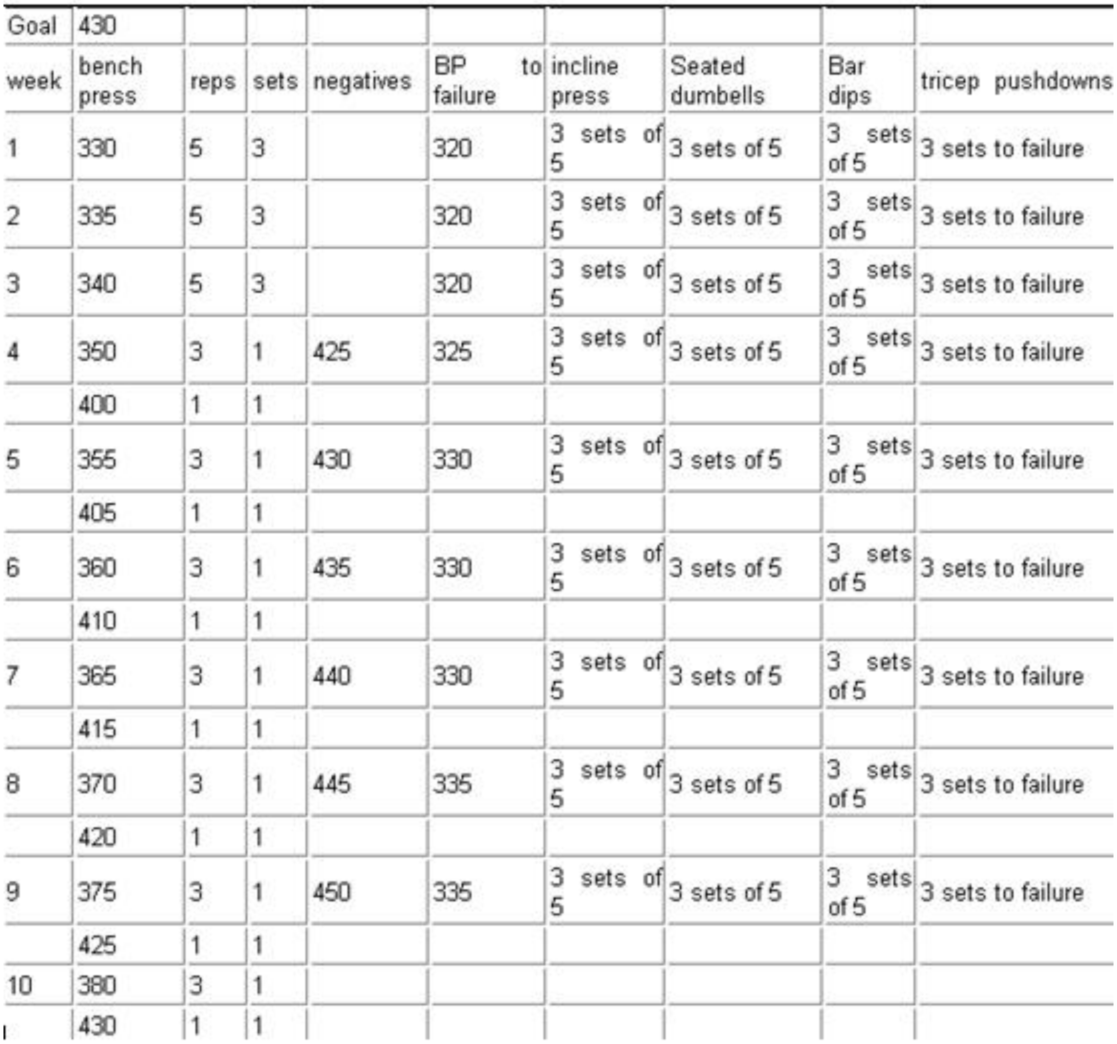
RICK WEIL

In a time when an afro and a 'stache didn't necessarily mean you raped small children in the bushes behind an elementary school, Rick Weil had both, and wore them proudly. In spite of his incontrovertibly terrible taste in above-the-neck hair, Weil was a badass on the bench. The records he set in 1983 and 1986 at 165 (485 lbs) and 181 (556) have remained untouched since he set them, and he's within 9 lbs of the world record bench at 198 with his lift at 181. According to Powerliftinghub, "this is not only the record for the 181's but the biggest triple bodyweight unequipped bench press of all time across any weight division." In other words, when Rick Weil opens his mouth about the bench press, you should fucking take heed, because he's the Ed Coan of bench pressing and can likely bench more with his semi-erect penis than you can with your entire upper body.

Interestingly, he is not averse to reverse gripping, either. According to his post on Bodybuilding.com, he "lift[ed] reverse grip, but never benched that way in competition. [He] did a lot of exhibitions reverse grip and actually did a 545 reverse in the gym. [He also] would do exhibitions with 505 for 5-6 reps." He was also a big fan of doing heavy negatives to increase your strength on the bench, though he cautioned that you should limit yourself to one or two singles at the end of a workout (Critical Bench). Doing so will strengthen your ligaments and tendons, in addition to work with better form on lighter weights, because you'll be accustomed to handling much heavier poundage.

RICK WEIL MUSTACHE POWER BENCH PRESS ROUTINE

(ASSUMES 400 LB. MAX)



Goal	430								
week	bench press	reps	sets	negatives	BP to failure	incline press	Seated dumbells	Bar dips	tricep pushdowns
1	330	5	3		320	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
2	335	5	3		320	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
3	340	5	3		320	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
4	350	3	1	425	325	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	400	1	1						
5	355	3	1	430	330	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	405	1	1						
6	360	3	1	435	330	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	410	1	1						
7	365	3	1	440	330	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	415	1	1						
8	370	3	1	445	335	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	420	1	1						
9	375	3	1	450	335	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets of 5	3 sets to failure
	425	1	1						
10	380	3	1						
	430	1	1						

Weil, who appears to be something of an intellectual, broke down the bench press into four distinct parts: the approach, the drive, the push, and the lockout. Each of these distinct parts of the lift have their own issues, all of which Weil addressed with different assistance movements or techniques.

> *"The approach is the part of the lift where you bring the bar down to your chest. This is important because done properly it sets up the rest of the lift for hitting the groove. Remember to stay very tight during the approach, do not relax at your chest. The negatives will help here."*

> *"When the bench command is given, the drive part of the lift begins. Practice pause benching in the gym because good habits are hard to break as well as bad habits. Also, injury can come from sloppy form, so always train as if a judge is watching. If you are stuck at your chest, perhaps you are forgetting a very strong and important body part at your disposal—your BACK. Remember the bench press is an upper body exercise and your back is part of your upper body. Powerlifters generally have very strong lats, so why not use them? With 135 on the bar, practice using your lats to drive the weight off of your chest. You do this by initiating a lat spread of sorts at the bottom of the lift. Trying is believing. It really works and with practice your lats will drive any weight off of your chest you would normally have been stuck with. Since powerlifters train their backs, only the lifters who strictly bench need to do special back exercises. I recommend doing lat pull downs and cable-seated rows for building the muscles necessary for the drive part of the bench press. Those of you with strong backs need only to work the correct form, getting used to driving with the back."*

> *"The push is that part of the lift between the drive and the lockout. Momentum is obtained from the lats in the drive, and then the front deltoids must take control. Front deltoids will move the weight, so train them as a separate body part. Steep incline presses will isolate the front delt if the bar is kept in close to your face and driven back towards the uprights. Seated dumbbell presses are not only great for the delts, but also one of my favorite exercises. This is performed seated straight up driving the weight with palms forward 3 sets of 5 reps on both of these exercises is plenty. Also only train them once a week. I have trained this way for three years, each body part once a week and made maximum gains on every cycle. This type of training also keeps injury to a minimum."*

> *"Now we come to one of the most frustrating parts of the bench press, the lockout. I have seen many lifters miss what appeared to be an easy lift, right at the top. There are two reasons for missing a lift at lockout; fatigue, which can cause bad form, or not enough tricep strength. If your gym does not have a dip bar, tell the owner to get one. Weighted dips are the best exercise for lockout power available. Close grip benching puts too much strain on the wrists and hinders complete tricep movement. Doing weighted dips with heavy weight, however, will not guarantee a powerful lockout. Remember the other reason I stated for missing a lockout? Fatigue. I had pushed 3 sets of 3 reps with 285lbs in the weighted dips in training, yet I was having a lockout problem. After a lot of thought I realized my problem was not strength, but tricep fatigue. My triceps were pumping too fast. To correct this problem I dropped the weight on the bench after doing negatives, down to 405 and did reps until failure. By the time I could perform 10 easy reps, my sticking point was gone. Now, I am not saying you should drop to 405, but 80% of your maximum lift is a good place to start. For example the 400lb bench presser would start with 320 to 325ls and try that for a week or two" (*Rick Weil *Bench Press Routine).*

Quite frankly, I don't know if that's a reprint from Weil's book, an article he one wrote for another publication, or something he did for Critical Bench, but it's informative as hell and a great primer for troubleshooting a piss-poor bench.

JENNIFER THOMPSON

Seeing a good woman benching is about as rare as seeing a John Wayne impersonator in a gay pride parade. In spite of this, Thompson hit 300 raw a couple of months ago in the hyper-critical USAPL. Given that she competed in a federation that seems to revere Josef Stalin as the godfather of fun, you know there was a motherfucker out there with a micrometer and someone measuring the weight on the bar to the nanogram. After she lifted, she was probably polygraphed, strip-searched, beaten with reeds, polygraphed again, and then piss-tested for everything short of protein excreted in her urine. I'm sure even after all of that they chased her around screaming "liar!" at her and pelting her with rotten vegetables until her blood tests came back negative. Those motherfuckers are as unfun as they are men-out-of-time, since they would have been far more at home in early 20th Century Europe, when being a fascist made you cooler than Rob Van Winkle in "Cool As Ice". In any event, you know Thompson's lift is legit if it happened in a USAPL meet, and she claims to have hit 315 in a less-jackbooted meet at some point.

Thompson's approach is completely unique, from what I've seen. Instead of alternating speed and heavy days, she's got alternate speed and heavy weeks. According to Jennifer, "My heavy week involves static holds and heavy set work. My speed week uses bands and I work on my single max lifts. When I have a long period between competitions I do a 12 week workout that starts with exercises at 10 reps and works it way down to 5 reps. I use this to build up my base strength" (SPL). Interestingly, the weight isn't as important as the speed of the lift for Thompson, and she will "drop 10 to 15 pounds on that exercise and work on the speed of the lift" if she's not improving from workout to workout (Ibid).

Her overall split looks like this:

Day 1: Chest
Day 2: Off
Day 3: Back, Biceps, and Calves
Day 4: Off
Day 5: Shoulders and Triceps
Day 6: Off
Day 7: Legs
Day 8: Off
*Abs are done as a warm-up on workout days.
(8-12 weeks on, then 1 week off. When restarting she simply lowers the weights and starts over.)(Thompson)

SPEED WEEK
Chest
Bench Singles (1 rep strict bench singles): 3 singles with 65%, 75%, and 85% of max
Increase one of your singles every lift if you get all 3
Bench (with bands or chains): 3 sets of 5
Set up the bands or chains to add resistance to the top of the lift to increase your speed through the sticking point.
Incline Bench: 2 sets of 5
Decline Bench: 2 sets of 5
Speed Bench Presses: 2 sets of 5
Strict (long paused explosive rep) Flies: 2 sets of 8
Stabilizer Push-ups (Push-ups on a stabilizer ball or board): 2 sets to failure

Shoulders and Tri's
Military Press: 3 sets of 5

Upright Rows: 2 sets of 8
Side Lateral Raises: 2 sets of 8
Dumbbell Shoulder Presses: 2 sets of 8
Offload Bench Presses: 3 sets of 5 (Attach bands above the bar so that weight is taken off the bar at the bottom to help increase your transition into your triceps)
Closegrip Bench: 2 sets of 8
Tricep Extensions: 2 sets of 8
Pushdowns: 2 sets of 8

HEAVY WEEK
Chest
Heavy Hold (Unlocked bench press hold for 15 seconds) Bench: 3 sets of 5
Incline Bench: 2 sets of 5
Decline Bench: 2 sets of 5
Negatives: 2 sets of 2
Dumbbell Stabilizer Presses (Dumbbell presses while lying on a large stabilizer ball): 2 sets of 8

Shoulders and Tris
Heavy Hold (Unlocked military press hold for 15 seconds) Military Press: 2 sets of 5
Upright Rows: 2 sets of 8
Back Lateral Raises: 2 sets of 8
Dumbbell Shoulder Presses: 2 sets of 8
Heavy Lockouts (Bench press last 5-7 inches of lift): 3 sets of 5
JM Presses: 2 sets of 8
Weighted Dips: 2 sets of 8
Single-arm Pushdowns: 2 sets of 8

UNITED STATES

TED ARCIDI

One of a few powerlifters who appears to be more gloriously bearded lumberjack than human, Arcidi's been credited with being one of the greatest bench pressers in history. The records he set in the 275 and 308 weight classes have stood the test of time and are at this point almost 30 years old, making them about 900 years sounger than the redwoods he's probably felled with a stern look and a gardening trowel when e's not in the gym. Sure, Jeremy Hoornstra beat Arcidi's 275 record, but bear in mind, Arcidi hit 650 at 275 and 666 at 308 in full meets, which have been known to be a bit more taxing than a leisurely bench-only meet. Arcidi's methods will likely look somewhat familiar to anyone who's done a periodized routine, although his rep scheme differs a bit, and one of his bench days per week was a simple 5 rep scheme and his volume would make most internet gurus start checking the blood pressure and cortisol levels of his family and friends for signs of second-hand overtraining. Additionally, although Arcidi was not a bodybuilder, he did rock abs at over 300 lbs, went on to work in the WWE and WCWW, and was both Triple H's and Chyna's strength coach long before DeFranco erroneously got all the credit for Triple H's physique.

12 Week Cycle

Weeks 1-3: 3 x 6
Weeks 4-6: 3 x 5
Weeks 7-9: 3 x 3
Weeks 10-11: combine sets of 3 and two reps
Week 12: meet day; open with a bench that you have done for at least four reps

Monday
Bench Press: 3 x 5/405-420
Behind-the-Neck Press: 3 x 5/260-300
Skull Crushers: 2 x 6/340-350
Standing Barbell Curls: 3 x 6/160-195
Lat Pulldowns: 3-4 x 10/240

Thursday
Bench Press: follow 12-week cycle
Behind-the-Neck Press: 3 x 6/225
Skull Crushers: 2 x 6/340-350
Standing Barbell Curls: 3 x 6/160-195
Lat Pulldowns: 3-4 x 10/240

(Do all heavy bench press sets with maximum poundages. Occasionally, do some forced reps. Rest for 5-6 minutes between bench press sets and 2 to 3 minutes between assistance work sets. Perform the last heavy workout ten days before the scheduled meet. Peak for only one or two competitions a year.)

Saturday
Squats: Your choice of sets and reps
Deadlifts: Your choice of sets and reps
Behind The Neck Press: 2 x 3/335-365

JEREMY HOORNSTRA

If there was ever a powerlifter who looked to be both good-looking enough and passably friendly to bang your girlfriend backstage while you were lifting at a meet and have you not end up too angry about matters, it's this motherfucker. Hoornstra broke Mike McDonald's 33 year old raw bench record at 242 with 661 press after nipping at its heels for a bit, and looks to have a long career of putting the record at 242 insanely out of everyone's reach ahead of him. Hoornstra competes in both bodybuilding and powerlifting, and sports arms big enough to make you consider heaving yourself off a fucking cliff.

Amusingly, Hoornstra's bench press routine is EXACTLY what you'd expect from a bodybuilder. This is probably why half of us are getting out-benched by alleged bodybuilders on a regular basis. Surprisingly, it's not done on International Bench Press Day (Monday), nor is it followed by a bit of biceps, just to get a pump on before the club. Instead, Hoornstra's split is a two a day schedule that looks like this:

Monday - Back, cardio (night)
Tuesday - Chest, Traps and Forearms (night)
Wednesday - Bi's, cardio (night)

Thursday - Shoulders, calves and abs (night)
Friday - Tri's, cardio (night)
Saturday - Legs

Biceps get their own day! I bet you fuckers didn't see that one coming. No stranger to volume, Hoornstra's throwing around a lot of weight for a shitload of reps with a variety of angles when he hits bench day, and rests no more than three minutes between sets. A typical workout looks something like this, but according to Hoornstra it varies greatly with his mood and enthusiasm:

Flat Bench Press
225 x 15
315 x 10
405 x 10
495 x 8
585 x 3
635 x 2
405 to failure

Incline Bench Press
315 x 10
405 x 8
495 x 5
495 x 5

Incline Dumbbell Flies
140's to failure for 3 sets (highest dumbbells the gym has)

Flat Cable Flies
Weight stack for 10 reps, 3 sets

Hammer Strength Chest Press
6 - 45's each side to failure, 2 sets

SCOT MENDELSON

In an effort to defy every stereotype one might hold about powerlifters, Scot Mendelson is one of the few 308 LB lifters you'll see rocking abs rather than a bleach-blond mullet, man-tits, and a massive gut. Mendelson is the current world record holder in the raw bench press with 715, making him one of the few guys in the circus-fat-man weight classes to double his bodyweight in the bench press. Mendelson also holds the equipped bench record at 275 with a ridiculous 1030 LB, a weight that may or may not have been represented by a Smart car precariously balanced on Mendelson's meaty hands. Mendelson clearly knows his shit when it comes to big benches, and given that he's an NYU grad, he's likely smarter than you. As such, his recommendations for a big bench are certainly worth following:

> 1) **Put your back into it**: Big chests do not make big bench-presses. Proper technique makes the primary movers the back (latissimus dorsi), triceps, and rear deltoids. On a standard 15-17" bench, pull your shoulder blades together so the shoulders rest on, and not off, the bench's surface. This

shortens the distance from the chest to full extension and eliminates your arms' weakest range of movement.

2) **Lift with your legs**: Put your body into a near-full arch when performing a maximal-lift bench-press: support your body on the toes or balls of your feet by putting your feet underneath your body and arching your back. Squeeze the bench between your thighs to stabilize your body and use leg drive to initiate the lift from the bottom.

Try to slam your heels through the ground on the decent to help keep your arch. This works for people who lift flat-footed and on the toes.

3) **Train for triples**: Dedicate one workout per week to the bench-press, performing 5-8 sets of 3 reps with 5-7 minutes between sets. Use 60% of your 1-repetition maximum (1RM), adding 5-10% per workout.

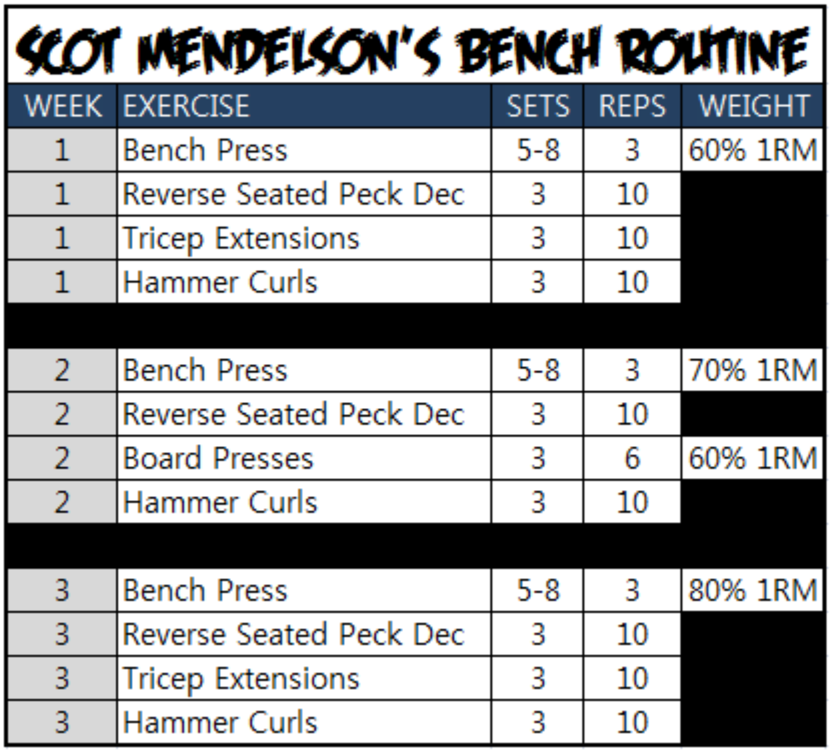
4) **Emphasize triceps, rear deltoid, and brachialis development**: Following the above 5-8 sets of bench-press, perform one exercise for rear deltoids, one exercise for triceps, and one exercise for the brachialis. Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions with 2-4 minutes between sets.

> **Rear deltoids**- Using a seated pec deck machine (used for crossing the arms in front of the body), reverse the motion by facing the opposite direction and moving your arms backwards.
>
> **Triceps**- Choose either A) tricep extensions or B) board presses (place a 4x4 board on the chest and perform bench-presses within this partial range of movement).
>
> **Brachialis**- The brachialis is a muscle on the outside of the bicep that supports arm movement at the elbow. Perform hammer curls (bicep curls where the thumb is kept pointing to the ceiling and the palm is not turned upward) to address this bodypart.

5) **For safety, do not use a "false-grip", where the thumb is placed under, rather than around, the bar**:

"Once I was bench-pressing with a false-grip and I got 584 lbs. to lock-out. The spotters thought I had it, so they took their hands away. The bar slipped, and 584 lbs. bounced off of my chest twice. I couldn't breathe properly for 2 months, but I had no broken bones-not even a bruise." Moral of the story: Hold the bar at shoulder-width with your thumb wrapped around the bar—safety is a precursor to efficacy and results.(Forum).

Mendelson's program seems oddly light and low-volume at the outset to me, but then again, he's a world record holder in the bench press and I'm not. This, of course, just points once more to the fact that it is going to take a lot of time, trial, and effort before you happen upon your best practices for the bench.



SCOT MENDELSON'S BENCH ROUTINE

WEEK	EXERCISE	SETS	REPS	WEIGHT
1	Bench Press	5-8	3	60% 1RM
1	Reverse Seated Peck Dec	3	10	
1	Tricep Extensions	3	10	
1	Hammer Curls	3	10	
2	Bench Press	5-8	3	70% 1RM
2	Reverse Seated Peck Dec	3	10	
2	Board Presses	3	6	60% 1RM
2	Hammer Curls	3	10	
3	Bench Press	5-8	3	80% 1RM
3	Reverse Seated Peck Dec	3	10	
3	Tricep Extensions	3	10	
3	Hammer Curls	3	10	

Bizarrely, Mendelson believes that much of his pressing power comes from his diet. One would think that diet would play a tremendously reduced role in the training of a person who specializes in a lift done while lying down, but Mendelson disagrees.

> "He consumes 12,000 calories a day, including 7,500 calories via weight-gainer shakes alone, 40 egg whites, 5 pounds of red meat, tons of pasta, and vegetables to provide fiber. He aims to ingest 2 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight per day, and even more as a competition nears, which gives him in excess of 700 grams daily. He prefers to eat two hours before he works out, because any later than that and it'll come right back up due to the pressures lifting such a heavy weight create in his body. After training, a shake is the easiest thing to get down; he usually has to wait a couple of hours before consuming a post-workout meal" (Wuebben).

KEN FANTANO

Ken Fantano might be the greatest powerlifter of whom you've never heard. According to Marty Gallagher, Fantano was a fucking beast, squatting 935 for a double to his heels, and doubling 625, paused, on the bench in nothing but a t-shirt (Gallagher 65). Sure, Fantano was a fat fuck at 365 pounds, but the dude could move some weight. Not only was he a beast, Fantano analyzed the shit out of every lift to determine the best methods of performance for each, acting like a Six Sigma Black Belt of powerlifting in spite of the fact that he rarely competed. Here are a couple of the form tips the bench press Jedi Ken Fantano provided the assemblage at his gym:

- **Bring the bar as low on your chest as possible**—"just above where the belly meets the sternum" (Gallagher 68).
- **Allow the bar sink into your chest slightly to get better drive, which loads the legs with more tension** (Ibid).

- **Press the legs hard toward the torso.** The leg jolt continues into the torso, ending in the chest. We purposefully create a jolt. The jolt, timed right and executed with power and push, creates momentum where there was none" (Ibid).
- **Use the incline bench to develop all of your strength for competitive benching, and do all reps paused** (Gallagher 69).
- **Pausing reps on your chest in training is key**— "If you don't pause your reps, you're wasting your time. If you don't have strength from a dead stop, muscle tissue won't get thicker" (70.)
- **Use 5 second pauses between reps to develop lockout strength** (71).

In addition to focusing on the above pressing attributes, Fantano split his training into two distinct phases, and trained in marathon sessions with a two day split.

PHASE 1: 12 weeks of training consisting primarily of Incline Dumbbell Bench— 4x6 (you need to make three sets of 6 with a given weight before you can move up).

PHASE 2:

Wednesday (This workout took four hours to complete)
Bench Press- 3 top sets with 40 lb increase between each set
Incline Dumbbell Press- 3 top sets of 10 reps with the same weight
Narrow Grip Flat Bench- 3 top sets with 40 lb increase between each set
Tricep Pushdowns- 3-4 x 15-25

Sunday
Squat- 3 top sets with 40 lb increase between each set
Deadlift- Work up to top set of 2-3 reps
Light Bench Press- 3x10 with 77% of projected 3rd attempt

It's an odd departure from the norm in terms of what the best benchers in history have done, but I thought his analysis of things you should bear in mind while benching bore repeating. Will I base my workouts on the recommendations of a circus fat man? Hell no, but his form tips seem to be key, and he definitely moved some weight off his flabby, gyno filled tits.

Bev Francis

In another time, Bev Francis would have ruled a clan of Amazons in southern Russia and been the terror of men for thousands of miles. As she was born out of time and place, she had to settle for being a ridiculously dominant athlete. Francis excelled in collegiate track and field, then dominated powerlifting, and finally ruled female bodybuilding for years. It's said that although she pulled a Seinfeld and made an early exit from powerlifting while still on the rise, had she continued in the sport Francis would have set records so ridiculous they'd have to ditch her weight class to encourage competitors to enter meets. She's the Ed Coan of females, if Ed had switched to bodybuilding after dominating the 181s and never looked back. Her bench, 331 at 181, still stands as a record over 30 years after she set it, and only one chick has come within 20 lbs of it in the last 5. Save for her unfortunately masculine visage when she turned from powerlifting to bodybuilding, Bev's a broad with whom a man should want to breed if he were inclined towards producing the ultimate human.

Befitting the overall impression she gives as a human being, Bev Francis's training was essentially superhuman. It consisted of 6 or 7 days a week of heavy benching and squatting, with the addition of deadlifts at the six week mark before a meet. Every now and again she's have what she referred to as a "play day" on which she'd do nothing but curls, some pulley work, and some sit ups, but as a general rule her policy was "squat and bench until you shit blood". Her rep range was all over the map, according to Francis:

> "Some days I would do sets of tens, some days I would do eights, sixes, fives, fours and threes, but I would always do a lot of sets. No matter what the rep range was I would always do at least a total of ten sets for each lift. Sometimes I'd do twenty sets" (Penman).

Oh, but that wasn't all she did, lest you think her some sort of shiftless layabout fit for the Starting Strength message boards. Nope— her ridiculously intense weight workouts were the tip of the iceberg. According to Francis:

> "I used to get up in the morning at 5.30am, go for a four mile run. I'd come back, shower, breakfast, go to work (teaching physical education and mathematics) at high school. At 4 o clock I'd leave there, go immediately to the university where I trained. Usually my workout consisted of about a mile and a half jogging, shot putting for about an hour, then a sprinting workout - something like ten 200's, twenty 100's, five 300's. Then I would go to the weight room and spend an hour and a half in the weight room. Then I would go home, make dinner, shower and collapse into bed" (Penman).

Rather than cycling her program, she just let her body tell her when to back off. In the same interview, Francis stated that she would "would train until I broke down, either from injury or sickness", but that she trained that way because she loved it. She also ate to facilitate that sort of training, stuffing her face with fat and protein calories to fuel those insane training days.

> "In fact at that time I had a very high fat diet. My favorite snack was salami and cheese. I used to eat a lot of red meat. I used to cook things in butter and I used to enjoy my sweets. I was never grossly fat though. I still had abdominals when I was nearly 180lbs. So I never carried a huge amount of body fat but I was very big legged and I carried a fair amount on my hips" (Penman).

Quite frankly, Francis wasn't bad looking as a powerlifter, and was certainly more attractive than she was as a bodybuilder. As such, ladies, you might want to consider adopting such a diet if you're serious about training. After she dropped out of powerlifting, Francis went on to be the runner-up in the Ms. Olympia and then into gym ownership, but word is she continued to train like a fucking lunatic and remained unbelievably strong throughout her career. If nothing else, her story's a feather in the gigantic pimp hat worn by the "train more, motherfucker" community as well as the "ladies is pimps, too" community, and is worth recounting for the simple fact that she out-benched most guys under 200 lbs.

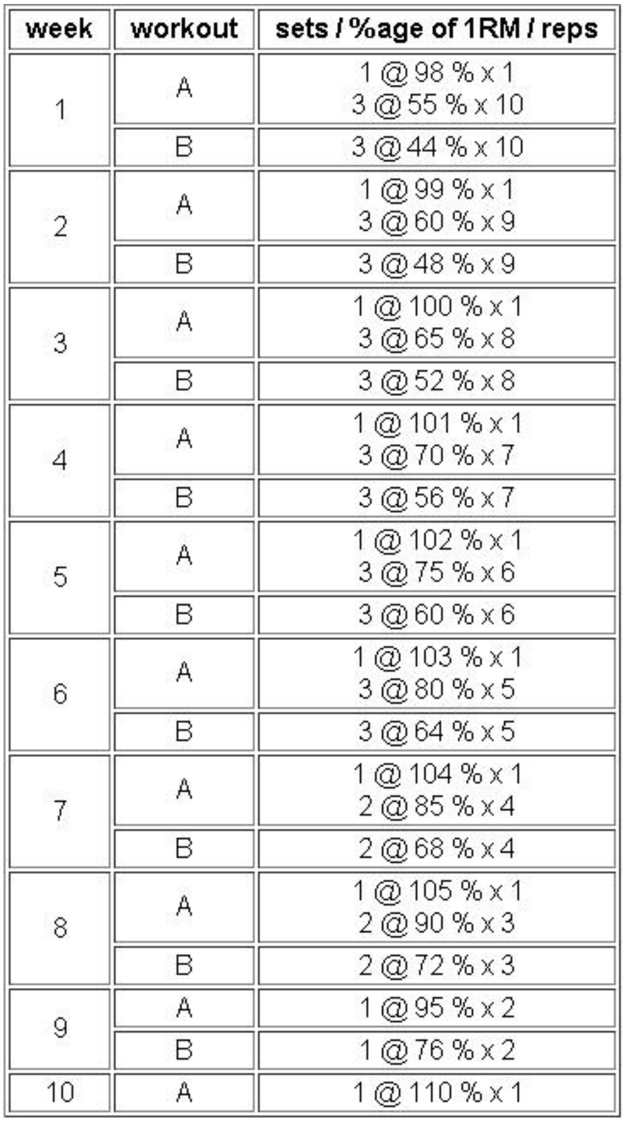
POWER SHACK GYM

KEN LAIN

To simply state that Ken Lain is a bit of an underground character would be akin to stating that the dude crooning horrible pop songs on his acoustic guitar at your corner dive bar on open mic night isn't quite a pop star. Though he's totally unknown in wider circles, Ken Lain is mentioned among big benchers like he was some sort of god in the early 1990s. Thus, amongst motherfuckers wearing neon-colored string tank tops and Zubaz pants, Ken Lain is a god among men. According to one source, Lain benched 655 at 242 and 722 at 308, though I would assume that these numbers are single-ply as he doesn't hold records in either of those classes. In any event, Lain's program was far more palatable to more conventional lifters, as he had a heavy/light scheme along the lines of Westside. Somewhat surprisingly, he front-loaded his weeks more than Vivid girls front-load their bodies after a trip to the plastic surgeon, and tapered hard toward week's end, mimicking the aforementioned porn stars' tiny asses.

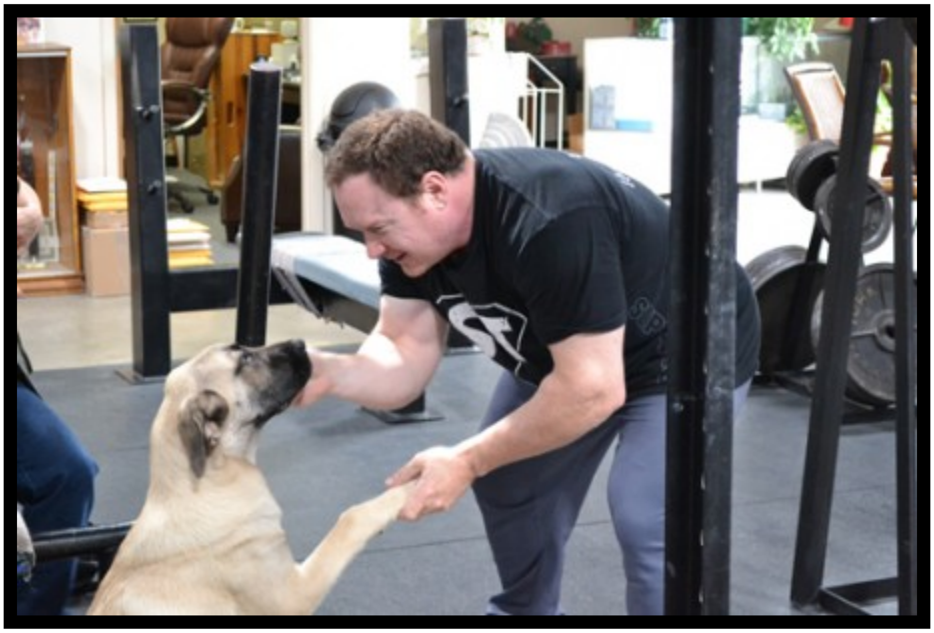
Monday: Heavy Chest, Shoulders, and Triceps
Tuesday: Heavy Back and Biceps
Wednesday: Legs
Thursday: Light Chest, Shoulders, and Triceps
Friday: Light Back and Biceps

Lain's chest periodization routine was as follows, and apparently got his some huge numbers on the bench (WeighTrainer).



week	workout	sets / %age of 1RM / reps
1	A	1 @ 98 % x 1 3 @ 55 % x 10
	B	3 @ 44 % x 10
2	A	1 @ 99 % x 1 3 @ 60 % x 9
	B	3 @ 48 % x 9
3	A	1 @ 100 % x 1 3 @ 65 % x 8
	B	3 @ 52 % x 8
4	A	1 @ 101 % x 1 3 @ 70 % x 7
	B	3 @ 56 % x 7
5	A	1 @ 102 % x 1 3 @ 75 % x 6
	B	3 @ 60 % x 6
6	A	1 @ 103 % x 1 3 @ 80 % x 5
	B	3 @ 64 % x 5
7	A	1 @ 104 % x 1 2 @ 85 % x 4
	B	2 @ 68 % x 4
8	A	1 @ 105 % x 1 2 @ 90 % x 3
	B	2 @ 72 % x 3
9	A	1 @ 95 % x 2
	B	1 @ 76 % x 2
10	A	1 @ 110 % x 1

The routine is designed to add 10% to your 1 rep maximum in 10 weeks. Clearly, when he says heavy, he means fucking heavy. Ramping up from 98% of your 1rm's not normal by any training protocol I've ever seen. As such, this is clearly a program where Tookie Williams' angel dust and PCP preworkout supplementation regime might come in extra handy (Wikipedia). I'm not recommending that any of you take angel dust prework, but I'm just saying— if you're going to try this routine, a little dust wouldn't hurt. Lain took 5-8 minute rests on heavy days to recover from the beating he put himself through, and kept his rests to 3 on light days. He'd follow the bench with 2-3 supplementary chest exercises of 2-3 sets of 6 to 8 reps, and then the same for the smaller muscle groups. For his light days, he'd never exceed 80% of what he did on his heavy day. This, of course, would be heavy by most modern trainees' standards, but unlike modern trainees, Ken Lain wasn't a flaming pussy.



ED COAN

There is no possible way, if you're into powerlifting in the slightest, that you've not heard of Ed Coan. Record holder for the deadlift in 181, 198, 220, and 242, Coan was a hell of a bencher as well. He benched two and a half times his bodyweight in multiple weight classes, and hit 545 at 220 and 573 at 242, both of which are completely respectable lifts for a guy basically known as a deadlifter. Coan's program was fairly simple, if intense. He dedicated two days a week to benching and a third to bench accessories, so his program looked like this:

Wednesday
Bench Press- 7-10 x2-8
Close Grip Bench- 2 x 2-8 (60 pounds less than bench and paused on the chest)
Incline Bench- 2 x 2-8 (30 pounds less)
Tricep Pushdowns- 2 x 2-8
Coan didn't warm up after his initial lift, incidentally— he just slammed into his work sets like Hatebreed into a breakdown, with no fucks given.

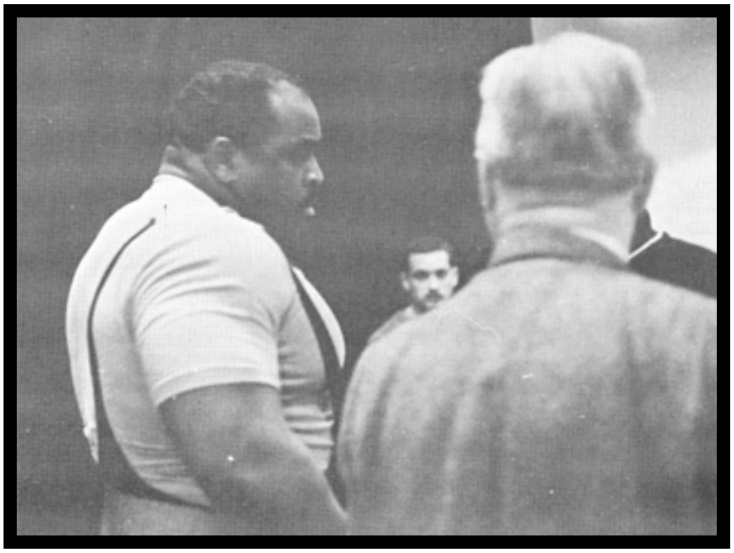
Thursday
Behind The Neck Press- 5 x 2-8
Front Lateral Raise- 2-3 x 10-12
Side Lateral Raise- 2-3 x 10-12
Bent Over Lateral Raise- 2 x 10-12

Saturday

Light Wide Grip Bench- 2 x 8-10 reps
Light Dumbbell Flies- 2 x 8-10 or 10-15
Tricep Pushdowns- 3 x 8-10 reps or 2 x 2-8
Dips- 1 x 8-10
Preacher curls- 2 x 10-12

(This is a lightweight, muscle flushing, chest workout. Ed does a couple of quick sets with a weight about 60 percent of his max (340x10) with his feet on a bench. A few sets of light flyes and he is ready for triceps.)

Kind of like the legendary samurai Mushashi, Coan travelled hither and yon, generally making asses of his competition and leaving them bloodied and destroyed in his wake. I assume that unlike Musashi, Coan’s desire to dominate those around him didn’t stem from the fact that he was a filthy motherfucker who smelled like his shit his pants and was publicly mocked for it. Instead, Coan liked embarrassing people on the platform just for the sake of doing it. Coan ended up benching over 500 lbs in competition 45 times, in a variety of weight classes. That, in and of itself, is fucking impressive. Coan's program wasn't just a successful program— it was a program that was successful over a long period of time, like a powerlifting version of Nintendo. That's impressive, especially considering the number of torn pecs and triceps of which we hear occurring as a regular part of elite lifting.



JIM WILLIAMS

Jim Williams is roundly considered to be one of the greatest bench pressers of all time, and in the 1970s was THE bench press virtuoso. That's pretty astonishing considering the level of preoccupation people seemed to have with that lift in the 70s, but it's a fact just the same. Williams had perhaps the craftiest, if unbelievably stupid, method for clearing his schedule for training— he'd go to jail. Williams seemed to make a habit of robbing people, printing counterfeit money, or just generally being an asshole enough to spend his entire life going in and out of prison. He'd make the most of his stays in the pen, however, as he'd pretty much train around the fucking clock while in lockup. The hilariously religious (he was forever going on about Jesus, I'm sure even as he was ripping people off for their life savings) Williams benched more often than anyone else in this list of maniacs, Bev Francis included. As a result, Williams was the second man to break the 600 lb barrier on the bench and held the world record at 675 for years until the aforementioned Ted Arcidi broke it. Of note was the fact that when Williams set these records, there were none of the interminable rounds now prevalent in powerlifting. As such, Williams always did all three attempts back to back, as there was no one lifting heavier than he. Additionally, no body movement of any kind was allowed when he started benching, presumably to avoid a resurgence of the old timey belly toss and in a nod to Stalin that was apparently intended to presage the modern USAPL. Additionally, Williams is credited with inventing the plate front raise, which he regularly did with a 100 lb plate for ten sets of ten (Fernando).

Monday
Squat- free choice of sets/reps
Bench Press- 6 x 5 with 405 lbs; 1 x 10 with 350 lbs.
Incline Barbell Press- 3 x 4 with 405 lbs; 1 x max 225 lbs.
Lat Machine Pulldowns- 8 x 20 with 125 lbs.; 1 x 6 with 315 lbs.; 1 x max with 125 lbs.

Upright Rows- 4 x 10 with 100-225 lbs.
Dumbbell Shoulder Press- 10 x 10
Dumbbell Curls- 10 x 10 with 100 lbs.
Lying Tricep Extensions- 7 x 15 with 135 lbs.; 1 x 6 with 315 lbs.; 1 x max with 135 lbs.
Forearm Curls- Multiple sets to failure

Tuesday
Bench Press- same as Monday
Press Behind the Neck- 5 x 10 with 225 lbs.
Dumbbell Bench Press- 10 x 10 with 120 lbs.
Decline Dumbbell Press- 10 x 10 with 130 lbs.
Pullover Press- 8 x 10 with 135 lbs.; 1 x reps with 425 lbs.
Bent-Over Dumbbell Raises- 10 x 10 with 45 lbs.
Lying Tricep Extensions- 10 x 10 with 225 lbs.
Preacher Curls- 10 x 10 with 100 lbs.
Forearm Curls- Multiple sets to failure

Wednesday
Squat- free choice of sets/reps
Bench Press- 2 x 1 with 525-550 lbs.; 1 x 10 with 315 lbs.
Lat Machine Pulldowns to the Neck- 10 x 10 with 275 lbs.
Lat Machine Pulldowns to the Chest- 10 sets 10 reps with 275 lbs.
Upright Rows- 5 sets of 10 reps with 100-250 lbs.
Deadlift- free choice of sets/reps
Incline Dumbbell Press- 10 sets 10 reps with 135 lbs.
Front Squat- free choice of sets/reps
Jim Williams Front Plate Lift- 10 sets of 10 reps with 100 lbs.
Dumbbell Curls- 10 sets of 10 reps with 75-100 lbs.
Lying Tricep Extensions- 6 x 15 with 135 lbs.; 1x3 with 325 lbs.; 1x max with 200 lbs.
Tricep Pushdowns- Extremely heavy, but free choice of sets/reps

Thursday
Bench Press- 3 x 2 reps with 550 lbs.; 1 set of 10 reps with 315 lbs.
Lat Machine Pulldowns- 10 x 10 with 275 lbs.
Dumbbell Shoulder Press- 8 x 10 with 135 lbs.
Lying Shrugs- 10 x 10 with 150 lbs.
Standing Barbell Curls- 6 x 10 with 135 lbs.; 1 x 3 with 275 lbs.
Lying Triceps Extensions- 6 sets of 15 reps (135 lbs.) + 3 reps (275 lbs.)
Tricep Pushdowns- use entire stack: free choice of sets/reps

Saturday
Squat- free choice of sets/reps
Bench Press- 1 x 1 with 600 lbs.; 1 x 10 reps with 405 lbs.
Deadlift- free choice of sets/reps
Lying Shrugs- 10 x 10 with 150 lbs.
Dumbbell Shoulder Training- free choice of sets/reps
Lying Tricep Extensions- 6 x 15 with 135 lbs.; 1 x 3 with 325 lbs.; 1 x max with 200 lbs.
Tricep Pushdowns- use entire stack: free choice of sets/reps
Standing Barbell Curls- 6 x 10 with 135 lbs.; 1 x 3 with 275 lbs (Diana).

WHAT THIS SHOULD TEACH YOU ABOUT TRAINING THE BENCH

It should be apparent to you after reading the foregoing that there are only a couple of consistent features to the greats' bench routines:

- **They all benched at least twice a week**
- **They all used moderately-high to high volume**
- **They all utilized fairly low reps at least part of the time.**

For regular readers of Chaos and Pain, these features should be about as revelatory as the press releases about Ricky Martin's homosexuality. With a few minor exceptions, the greatest lifters in history have all practiced their craft frequently, heavily, and enthusiastically. As such, it would stand to reason that one would have to do the same to obtain a huge bench. I discovered this myself over the last year through trial and error, and quite frankly, I regret ever abandoning the bench in the first place. Had I not done so, I would almost assuredly be benching over 400 now, rather than simply flirting with 400 like a sorostitute with a fratboy while waiting to see what car manufacturer is emblazoned on his key fob. I have, however, made great strides in the bench press in the last year and continue to do so, owing in no small part to the following changes to my workouts.

CHANGES WORTH MAKING TO YOUR BENCH ROUTINE

Paused Benching. There is perhaps no other change I've made in the last year or so that has had greater effect on my bench press than my conversion to 100% paused benching. My conversion occurred, oddly enough, as a result of my episodic incline reverse grip bench press fetish. As I mentioned in my post on the exercise, I was forced to do it from the bottom position because I never have a spotter. Though dangerous, probably ill-considered, and definitely irresponsible, I got my bottom-position reverse grip incline up to 330, which was impressive considering that at the time I did it, I'd not benched that much on the flat bench in competition. After making an ass of myself in two consecutive meets on the bench, I resolved to apply myself to an effort to prevent my parents from committing seppuku when seeing my bench press numbers. There are, after all, three lifts in powerlifting, and my obsessive focus on a single lift seemed to be doing me little good in terms of snatching the world record total. I began flat benching with a 2 second pause on every rep at the bottom, and my lifts began to increase. When I increased the pause at the lockout as well, my max bench increased further still. Though this may not hold for non-competition benchers, I think it bears in mind that one should practice how one intends to play, ego be damned. Thus, if you intend to compete in powerlifting, put your ego aside (and holy shit, that's the most herculean effort one will probably make in increasing one's bench) and abandon touch and go bench presses for (at the very least) the first repetition of each set.

Increased Frequency. Certainly, practicing the lift at all has a massive impact. In my first year of lifting, I benched perhaps three times a week, and did weighted dips at least that often. I was consumed with increasing my bench at all costs, and made massive gains, going from 135 to 285 between my sophomore and the end of my junior years in high school. From there, my bench fluctuated up and down but hovered around 300 for over a decade. My bodyweight increased, but my bench didn't. At the time, I was still rocking a bodypart split like my name was Joe Weider, and I suffered the consequences. After a while, I abandoned the bench altogether for concentration on the lifts that actually moved, going back to the bench only in times of boredom or necessity (like for a meet). For perhaps three years I rarely benched at all, and my bench press didn't backslide all that much due to ancillary growth in other areas, but it didn't increase either. Thus, as I found it necessary to bench press for competitions, I discovered something— the more I did it, the better I got. That's not to say one should bench every day and expect to rival Scot Mendelson in a year. It did work for Bev Francis, however, and all of us likely know some beach-muscle laden freaks in our respective gyms with wildly disproportionate benches who obtained them with hyper-frequent benching. Thus, increased frequency bears investigation.

As seems to be most common, I generally bench twice a week, with one workout consisting of extremely heavy triples, doubles, and singles, followed generally by a touch-and-go death set, and a second workout consisting of sets of 5 and 3. In the second workout I focus on explosiveness, whereas on the first I focus on simply moving the most weight possible.

At the very least, you should *consider* twice a week benching. Before those among you who are still clinging to the belief that you're a special snowflake because you're so drug free that you think the International Olympic Committee's ridiculous testing protocols are lax and you spit on straightedge kids for not being drug-free enough, settle the fuck down. This lesson applies to you as well. Just because you're natural does not mean that you're an emotional and physical cripple, so your incessant whining is unwarranted. Take, for instance, the case of Marvin Eder. Eder lifted in the pre-steroid era and pulled off a 515 bench at a bodyweight of 203 on a rickety, home-built bench, and he usually cleaned the weight from the floor and then began benching. Eder benched two or three times a week and usually used a 5x10 protocol when benching. That means he did between 100 and 150 reps on the bench every week (Carson and Robson).

With that out of the way, I have not decided if the benefit of twice a week benching comes from improved form (as Ken Fantano would insist), comfort with the lift, increased strength from the frequency, or a combination thereof, but the why does not matter nearly as much as the what. If we learn nothing from history, we are doomed to repeat it, and there's plenty of shitheads throughout history with shitty benches who ignored the methods of the greats. Let us not repeat their inexcusable mistake, shall we?

Bench Press Support Staff Worth A Shit

Though each of the aforementioned greats had their own take on which assistance lifts were best, there are at least a couple that stand as standards. Additionally, I've got a couple of favorites of my own worth recommending that have helped my bench press considerably in the last year. Though you might be inclined to separate these exercises by bodyparts, the chest, triceps, and shoulders work so synergistically that dividing them out by bodypart is rather pointless.

Close Grip Bench Press. Most of the aforementioned greats in bench pressing relied heavily on close grip bench presses as one of their main, if not the main, support exercise for the bench press. Doug Young was probably the biggest proponent of the exercise of the lifters above I've listed, and I'm sure a number of the above included the close grip bench on their tricep day, as it places the majority of the stress on the triceps. I've personally noticed that since I began working hard and heavily on the close grip bench, both my regular grip and reverse grip bench presses have gone up dramatically, and I have far less tendency to raise my ass off the bench as well.

Recommended Rep Range: 2-10 reps. I will occasionally go for a max single, but it's more for fun than anything else. Otherwise, I typically keep my reps in the 3-5 range for sets ranging between 4 and 10, depending on my mood and how I feel.

Form Tips: I recommend strongly against taking an extremely narrow grip on this exercise. I typically grip the bar right where the knurling starts, and do not recommend going closer than that, as it strains your wrists and flares your elbows. As you're attempting to focus on the triceps, this is definitely an exercise on which you want to pin your elbows in as close to your sides as you can while performing this lift. Otherwise, it's done with exactly the same form and setup as your regular competition bench press.

Weighted Dips. Though I know some people will dispute the utility of this lift, I've found that the strength to be gained from what's been described by various authors as the "upper body squat" spans a number of lifts. Rick Weil seemed to agree, and as his bench was perhaps the most impressive of those I've listed, it is something to consider. Most gyms have absolutely shit weight belts (I broke three belts in three weeks in a gym in Austria doing weighted dips), you might want to invest in a high quality dipping belt. They're typically inexpensive, and they'll make your life much easier in the long run. As with straps, I'm partial to Spud Inc's dip belt. Get yours wherever you want- no one's paying me to promote their gear- Spud's stuff is simply the only stuff on Earth that seems to hold up over time.

Recommended Rep Range: 2 – Infinity. Quite frankly, there's no upper limit on these, and I've found myself in a zone with 45 lbs hanging off my belt wherein I've gotten upwards of 50 reps. As per usual, I typically go heavy on these, but it's fun to ratchet up the reps on these every now and again and go for a sort of an upper body jog with weighted dips.

Form Tips: Quite frankly, this exercise is pretty hard to fuck up. I prefer to go very deep on these and stop just short of lockout, but people with shoulder injuries would likely vomit from the pain if they tried that. Thus, do whatever feels comfortable. If you cannot do a single unweighted dip, you're obviously going to have to start somewhere. This technique will work for those of you who want to work ultra-heavy weights you cannot quite handle with weighted dips as well- negatives. Jump to the top of the dip position and lower yourself as slowly as you can. When you're to the point where you're just crashing to the ground, do a couple of reps wherein you just hold yourself at the top as long as you can. Within a couple of weeks you'll be dipping (or dipping with the weight for which you were training) with no problem.

Tricep Extensions. These come in a wide variety of shapes and flavors, so it really just stands to you to find one and hammer the bejeesus out of it. I personally prefer standing cable rope pushdowns, but others prefer skullcrushers, French curl (standing overhead tricep extensions), or seated dumbbell overhead extensions. I frankly think the latter is an exercise that clearly defines one as a knownothing in the gym, but I'm quite certain there has to be a useful lifter out there who does them. Nevertheless, I think it's a bullshit exercise and is likely far more injurious to the ligaments and tendons in your elbows and wrists than it is beneficial to your tricep strength.

Recommended Rep Range: 4-100. I'd not bothered with much of anything over 25 previously, but after hearing about Vince Urbank's use of 100 rep sets for tricep and bicep strength, I've started including ultra-high rep sets to speed recovery. Generally, however, I stick to 8-15 reps per set on extensions to make them a general conditioning movement.

Form Tips: As a general rule, I'd avoid explosive movements on these, as they put a lot of shearing force on your elbow due to the extreme angle of flexion. Other than that, just have at it.

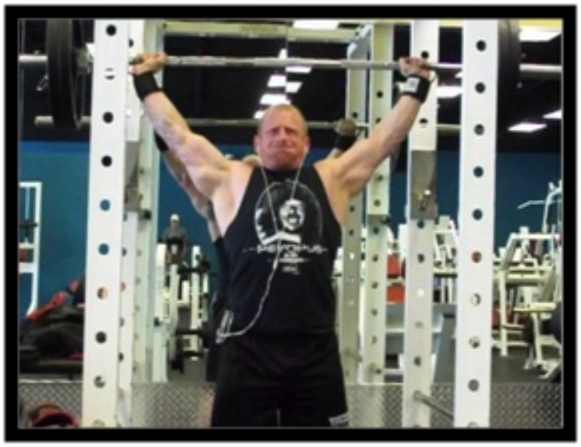
Cable or Band Crossovers. This probably will come a great shock to many of you, but I realized this year that the only thing that kept my bench from disappearing altogether when I tore my tricep was the fact that I did band crossovers religiously while in a cast. Since then, I reintroduced cable crossovers into my workout as an early morning flushing exercise to speed recovery and seem to have benefitted from their inclusion quite a bit.

Recommended Rep Range: 8-15. This is just to flush your chest with blood.

Form Tips: Read the machine. It will tell you everything you need to know.

Greater shoulder strength cannot be undersold for bench assistance. Not only does increased shoulder strength confer awesome fucking shoulders, but it improves your bench. I'll allow my vanity to take over for a second and I'll impart a bit of what I've learned about the human body over years of seeing jacked people in the gym— if you've got striated, vascular shoulders, the rest of your body could look like dogshit and people will still think you look phenomenal. I've been mocked by a variety of chicks in the past for my obsession with my shoulder striations, but they know as well as I that they give the impression of massive strength (in addition to looking cool as fuck).

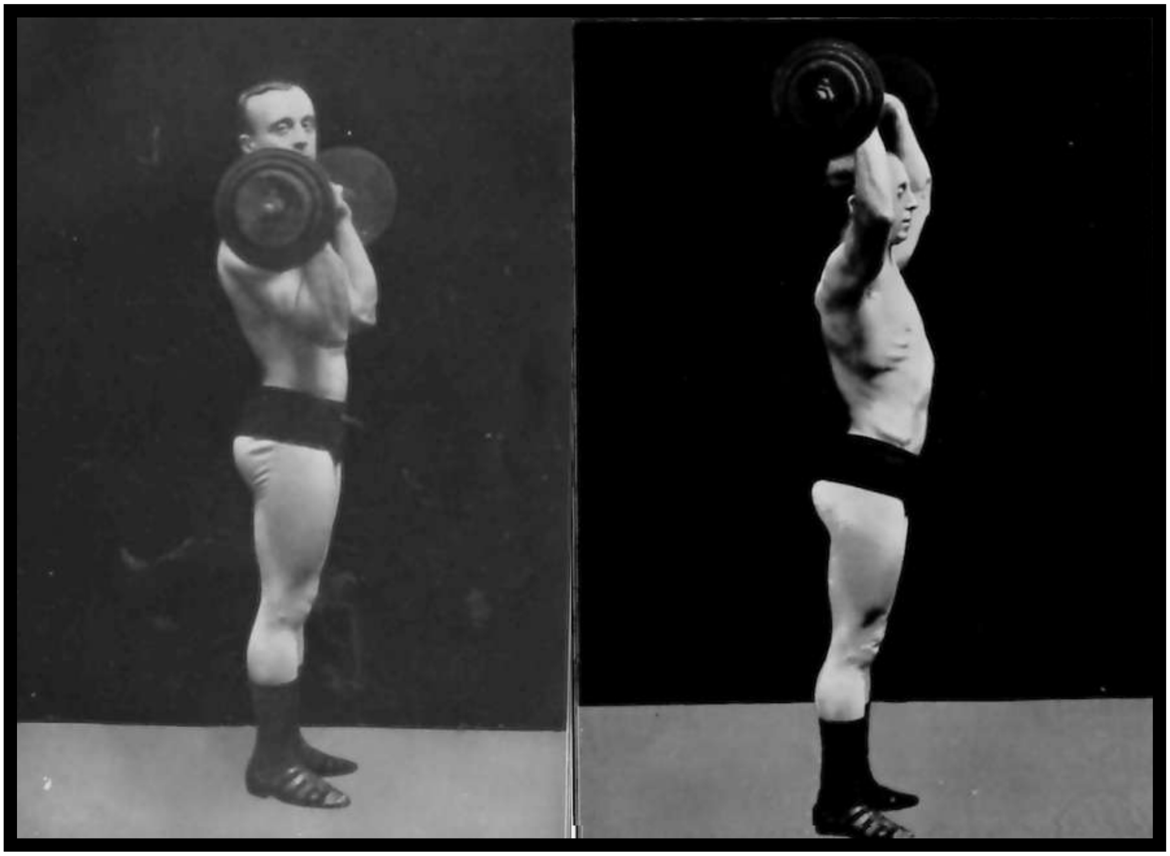
Vanity aside, increasing shoulder strength will always, in my opinion, lead to increased bench strength, though the obverse is definitely not true. There are three exercises I utilize at a minimum of four times a week to constantly improve my shoulder strength:



Klokov Press: Known over the years as behind the neck snatch grip strict press, or somesuch unwieldy nonsense, Paul from Lift-Run-Bang and I have taken to calling them Klokov Presses in honor of the Russian monster himself. There's a video I've posted before of Klokov doing this press, and it's done more to popularize the movement than any other mention or example in history. Klokov's a fucking beast, the lift is a bitch, and you will get stronger doing it.

Recommended Rep Range: 1-10. There is nothing more agonizing than a heavy single on a Klokov Press, and those singles will help inure you to the agony of grinding out hard reps in meets. As such, they definitely have a place in training. Additionally, higher rep sets are useful for building general shoulder strength and opening up your shoulder girdle. Thus, you should include a range of reps on Klokovs.

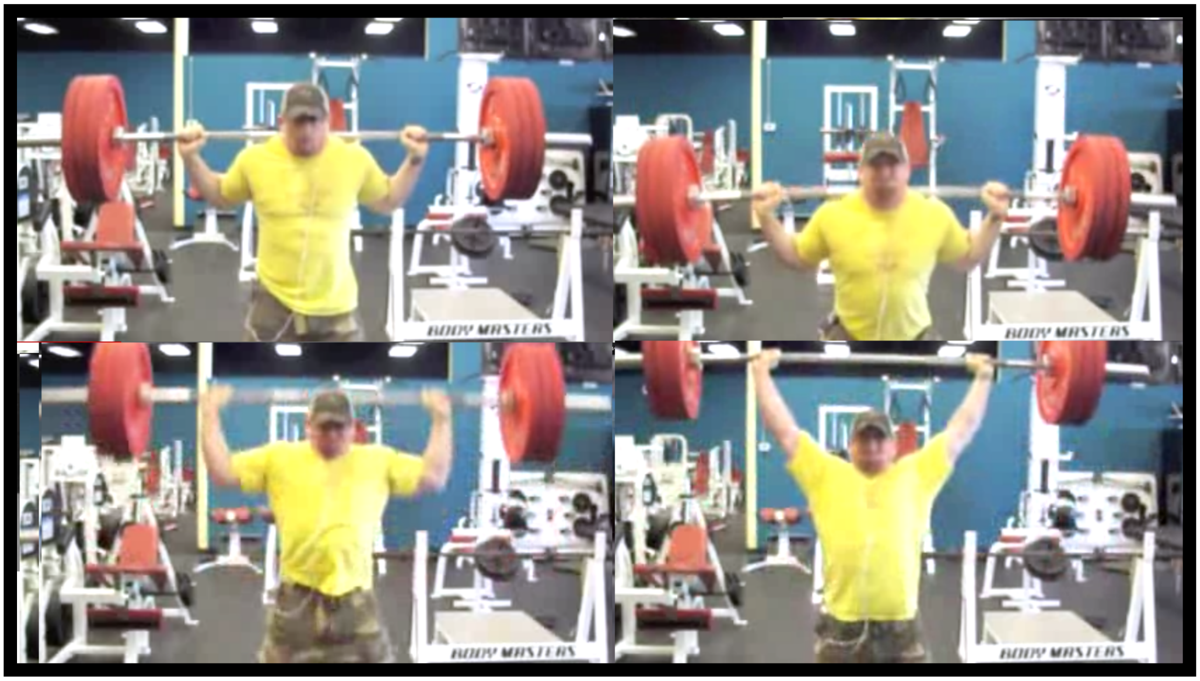
Form Tips: To do a Klokov Press, you will unrack the weight as if you are going to squat it, but with the same grip width you would use for a snatch (somewhere between your pinky on the outside edge of the knurling to your pinky against the collar. Then, you will press the weight overhead with your legs completely locked. That’s right- you will use no leg drive whatsoever. The first time you try this, it will be extremely difficult to adjust to the feel of this exercise, so start very, very light. This lift is a grinder from start to finish, so be prepared to gut out some slow-moving overhead presses when you try these.



Military Press: I am not referring to the colloquial version of this press, but instead the real fucking deal, as they did in the days before the widespread use of electricity. Like the Klokov Press, these are true man-makers, and really help with building tricep and shoulder strength. As such, they're a great addition to pretty much any workout day, and due to the fact that the strict nature of the lift limits the weight you can do, you can do them extremely frequently.

Recommended Rep Range: 1-10. Same deal as Klokov presses.

Form Tips: This is a fairly simple exercise. The name, "military" refers to the position of your body during the lift- you should be standing rigidly upright, with your heels together, as if you were standing at attention in the military. You start with the weight in the "rack position" on your chest, and then press it steadily upward without any body English at all.



Behind the Neck Push Press: I suppose I've been one of the driving forces behind the popularization of this exercise, but I actually picked it up from a video in which Mariusz Pudzianowski did it with 405 lbs. for reps. I figured if it was good enough for him, it was good enough for me. Since I started doing them, I noticed that they help my hip drive in any movement that requires it, have packed a shitload of muscle onto my shoulders and traps, and my bench has gone up. Thus, they're definitely worth doing.

Recommended Rep Range: 1-5. The more reps you do, the more tired you get, and the higher the probability you cripple yourself by falling into something or dropping the bar in the wrong spot. Thus, keep the reps low.

Form Tips: The biggest tip I can give you is to clear your mind of fear before you start the lift. Fear is a killer on this one- you'll drop the weight wrong, quit on lifts you could finish, and generally suck. To clear my mind, I bounce the weight on my back a bit before putting weight overhead. This might be wishful thinking, or what the teeming, unwashed, idiot hordes on the internet refer to as "broscience", but I think the force of the weight on my back causes a response in my CNS in the form of an adrenaline dump. Dip your hips 4 to 6 inches, then drive as hard as you can skyward. Once the weight is overhead, hold it for a couple of counts. The hold at the top seems to result in a great strength transfer. From there, you can either return it to your back or dump it forward onto the floor if you're using bumper plates.

Of Questionable or No Value:

- **There is no reason on Earth, in my opinion, to do lateral or front raises, unless you just hate the shit out of your rotator cuffs and wish to hasten their demise**. I realize some of the greats have done them, but I've personally found them to be fucking worthless. Face pulls and rear delt machine lateral on the pec deck machine are worth doing on a regular basis, however, and I include them in my light morning workouts a couple of times a week for high reps (12-20 reps).
- **I have found no value in the decline bench press whatsoever**. It's a vanity lift for people who suck at benching, nothing more. All of the same muscle groups are activated in the flat bench press, and the flat bench has a greater range of motion.
- **For raw benchers, I'm strongly of the opinion that board presses and band presses are totally valueless**. Those two exercises are specifically designed to mimic the increased load throughout the range of motion of a shirted bench, and in no way translate to raw benching. If you want to do a shortened range of motion, I think that partial repetitions in the rack are a far better option, as you have to generate far more force to move an immobile object that you do one that's already moving, and that greater force can be used to build strength in positions that are sticking or slowing points in your lift. If you have sticking or slowing points, set the pins in the squat rack at that point, then bench from there with your competition bench form. Be forewarned- it is very uncomfortable to do so.
- **Dumbbell bench presses are worthless**. Leave them for people who are too embarrassed to have people see them perform a barbell bench press. If you're weak, they serve no real purpose in improving your bench press, and increase your risk of injury for no reason. If you're strong, you'll just require a bunch of friends standing around you handing you dumbbells, which is annoying. Stick to barbells.

OTHER IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE BENCH

Find Your Best Form. This is the hardest part, and the part with which I cannot help you. No one can, really, other than yourself. If you look at the first post in this series, you'll see no two great benchers have the same form. Jen Thompson has lauded other benchers in interviews for their elbow flare, much to Louie Simmons' apparent consternation. You can rest assured for each accepted bench form platitude you uncover, you'll find several amazing benchers that not only violate the precepts set forth, but do so like they're gang raping the broad in Last House on the Left after making her piss her pants. On a wholly unrelated note, the actress in the original actually pisses her pants in that scene, making it ten thousands times as hot as it already was. Thus, pretend you're Wes

Craven— you have no budget for special effects, and are going to have to figure out how to make it happen by your motherfucking self. Though specific form tips generally don't apply across the board, certain methods do seem to apply across the board:

Stay tight. During my last meet I texted with Paul from Lift-Run-Bang quite a bit, and utterly ignored his advice in this regard. On my second attempt, which was light, I missed the lift because I laid down on the bench like I was about to take a fucking nap. That was a mistake. Since then, I've set up and performed every single bench press exactly the same way— tight setup, shoulder blades retracted, and fully tensed. Because of this, I've found that I perform much less erratically on the bench, and feel stronger on every heavy attempt.

Drive with your legs. You'll read a lot of bullshit about proper placement of your feet. It's all nonsense— you'll figure it out with trial and error, and the occasional strained thigh muscle. That's right, if you drive correctly with your legs, they actually get that involved. Dig in with your feet and try to push the floor away from you when you're pressing the bar upward. You'll get a transfer of power, a veritable shockwave as Ken Fantano described it, and that will help move the bar.

Grip the fuck out of the bar. I've never gotten anything out of trying to "snap" the bar in half, as Westside guys seem to claim to attempt. I have noticed, however, that if you grip the shit out of the bar, it will help you maintain tightness in your upper body.

Fill In The Blanks. Whether it's face pulls, which appear to be the darling of every shitty lifter on the planet, or something else you've identified as needing extra attention, most of you are going to need to do more accessory work that you'd like to think to eliminate sticking points. In my previous entry about Rick Weil, I included his prescriptions for failed bench presses at certain points in the lift. Other lifters, like Bill Kazmaier, for instance, believe that hammer curls are essential for a great bench press, while I realized that my pectoral development was lacking and started banging out high rep sets of cable crossovers to rectify the issue. I do think that frequent, high-rep work on supporting muscle groups are a good idea to strengthen tendons and increase blood flow to those regions, so you might want to consider some high repetition sets of rope pushdowns to flush out your triceps, among other things.

Are any of the above a panacea for an ailing bench press? No, because there is no one easy way to make a shitty bench press excellent. The above recommendations, however, can certainly get you back on the path towards a respectable bench press. There's very little that's universal about weightlifting, but the above seems to be pretty standard across every good bencher's routine and technique. Thus, it's time to stop fucking about, sack up, and start benching hard and heavy if you want to get respectable at that lift. Go bench, because somewhere there’s a tiny blond haired broad out-benching you on every single set.

MAKING YOUR DEADLIFT EVEN MORE DEADLY

Much has been made, on sundry message boards, of my refusal to do the deadlift in the gym. Many have decided to ape my methods due a variety of factors, though the most predominant one, in my mind, is the fact that the deadlift is the hardest fucking thing you'll do in the gym, nine times out of ten. It's a brutal, gut-wrenching, man-making lift during which you can actually feel your testicles drop, and afterwards, you sound like Barry White, provided you've got enough weight on the bar. Skipping the deadlift, then, is usually nothing more than caving into the fear of hard work, a fear that's more ubiquitous in our society than rhinestones on a tranny's Saturday night wardrobe.

Why, then, do I skip it?

Because unlike most people, I've earned the right to do so, and I'm focused on the squat. As I stated in the introduction, it's nearly impossible to be epic at both the squat and the deadlift. That's not to say you should completely neglect one or the other, but rather that if you're entirely focused on the one, your training for the other will have to be altered. Luckily, I've found that even if you pull conventionally, there's still a decent amount of carryover from the squat to the deadlift. Thus, if your squat's going up and that's your focus, your deadlift is going to follow. Unfortunately, the obverse is not as true, although there is some carryover if you pull sumo.

For at least a decade, I deadlifted more in a year than most of you have masturbated in your lives. I pounded the shit out of the lift, doing every conceivable variation for innumerable sets and reps. My deadlift workouts took, on average, 90 minutes, and ran the gamut in design from half an hour of pulling singles with 90% of my one rep max for max reps (my record was 27), to 10-8-6-4-2-2-4-6-8-10, to German Volume Training, to 5 sets of 5 followed by a death set with 315, to an utterly ridiculous workout consisting of deadlifts, one arm deads, two finger deads, rack pulls, and shrugs. That was, in fact, a workout I used for over a year, and resulted in mid-back cramping I still experience when I pull, a decade later. It did, however, give me a gym best of 545 at a bodyweight of 165. Once I hit 600 for a single, however, I noticed that the high-percentage lifts that had gotten me to that point were killing a variety of other lifts, as my back would be too sore and too exhausted to allow me to do other lifts that I loved— namely, the back squat and overhead pressing. Thus, I started dropping deadlift workouts but added specific movements that would have a lot of carryover into the deadlift. These exercises, combined with squat workouts so frequent and brutal that I could hang with most Bulgarians, have kept my deadlift moving forward in spite of the fact that I've removed it from my training.

If you choose to be a deadlift specialist, however, you're going to need to have single-minded focus on that lift that rivals a foot fetishist's focus in the women's shoe department in an upscale shoe store. That's the way I initially got my deadlift to respectable levels, and it's the only way you can take your deadlift from decent to epic. Before you head off to the gym with a heart full of hate and blood in your eyes, ready to do damage on the deadlift, bear this in mind- the deadlift is not something at which you will immediately excel. Certainly, it's a lift at which you can quickly achieve competence, unless you're taking the advice of people on internet message boards, all of whom seem to think 315 is a laudable goal for a male weighing over 150 lbs. In case you think it is, it's not— that is a point at which you can stop being utterly embarrassed about deadlifting, nothing more. 315 is a milestone only in that it's the day you can stop hanging your head in shame when you enter the gym, rather than a milestone worth mentioning to strangers with a heart full of pride. That might sting to hear, but frankly, if you've been training for more than two years and you can't pull 315, you should feel nothing but crushing depression. For women and men under 150, 255's pretty much your shame threshold. Thus, if you're in the shamed category, you should pay close attention to the following and then head directly to the gym to wreck shop. Actually, fuck that— you should head to the gym and wreck shop irrespective of your relative strength level, because after reading the following you should be pumped as hell to tear into the deadlift like a fat person into a Vegas buffet.

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THERE WILL BE FUCKING MURDERS

Murdering the deadlift is much like committing an actual murder. The first step in a successful murder is the formulation of a plan for the murder's execution. Unfortunately, just as many deadlift routines seem to bog down in the planning stages as do successful murders. This has led many of you to engage in debates online so insipid that they would shock even the least functional simpleton, as that simpleton certainly would not ask another retard for advice on how to do long division— he'd instead emulate the actions of people who do long division well. Worse yet, the planning stage for many of you seems to stall at the simplest and most basic of stages— determining which stance to use. This, then, leads to interminable debates about the efficacy of each stance, citing official-sounding yet vapid "facts" about the biomechanical advantages of each. At this point, you should remind yourself that 99.9% of the message board gurus have no fucking clue what they're talking about, and are certainly weaker than random go-getters who just go into the gym and yank the fucking bar off the ground. As such, you should avoid these debates like the plague that they are. Planning your deadlift workouts shouldn't be terribly difficult— as you'll soon see, there are some none-too-bright guys who have pulled tremendous amounts of weight through out history. Despite that, you will need to put some thought into how you'll deadlift, so that when you finally approach the bar, all you have to worry about is pulling. You, then, need to determine which style of deadlift you'll adopt as your own, and finally hone your technique in it with repetition to get awesome at it. There's not much more to the deadlift than that— pick a style, stick with it, and then get brutally strong.

HOW TO SELECT THE PERFECT STANCE FOR YOU

To find your perfect stance, you should do what anyone worth half a shit has done before you— experiment. Bob Peoples, the greatest 181 pound deadlifter prior to the arrival of chimp-like freak of nature Ed Coan put the record out of everyone's reach, experimented constantly with his form, and eventually developed a form more unique than the penises on *Body Modification* E-zine (you know, the guys who brought us that Pain Olympic video with people hacking at their cocks with hatchets and the like). Through years of experimentation, Peoples eventually pulled 728 at a bodyweight of 178, using form that could only be described by any "guru" as horrific— he pulled with a round back and stiff legs, after completely exhaling, and with a double overhand grip (Hise). That's right— years of experimentation led him to set a record that stood for decades with form that still stands as perhaps the most unique in history.

> "Our deadlift champion began to study his body leverages and gravity centers. He would take a bar in a starting deadlift position and view himself an a mirror and notice by the raising or lowering of the bar as he changed grips, using different height shoes, inhaling slightly, inhaling heavily, exhaling slightly, exhaling heavily and observing the positions and conditions that suited him best" (Hise, Deadlifter).

Bob Peoples' record setting form would be regarded with naught but horror by most, and would certainly get the idiots on Youtube to claim that it should send his spinal column soaring into the air, give him AIDS, and could only be the product of massive steroid use— weak people are incredibly overdramatic. Despite what weak people and personal trainers the world over would proclaim about Peoples' form, "his deadlift style.... is not "incorrect" for him because his type of physique with rather long legs, short trunk and very long arms makes it the best style for him" (Peoples).

One might think that if they could describe their body type similarly, this form should allow them to match Peoples' numbers with identical form. That, however, dramatically oversimplifies the extraordinarily complex issue of biochemical and biomechanical individuality between humans. No two people are alike in their leverages, unless they happen to be clones, owing to differing limb lengths, bone thickness, tendon and ligament strength, muscle fiber type composition, muscular insertion positioning, and a variety of other factors too lengthy to name. Should you feel it necessary to call bullshit, consider this— Bob Peoples' body type has been ascribed to another amazing deadlifter with completely different deadlift style, and his unique form led him to break Peoples' long-standing record by a considerable margin. You might have heard of him— Ed Coan. Coan is five feet five inches tall and boasts arms that nearly hang to his knees, due to the fact that his arms and legs were incredibly long compared to the length of his trunk. Because he's built as if he were the unholy child of a chimpanzee and a postal box, Coan had incredible success deadlifting. At 181, Coan pulled 793; at 198, he pulled 859; at 219, he pulled 901; and at 241 he pulled 887 (Gallagher 60).

Quads
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Like Peoples, Coan also pulled with a unique style, as his stance wasn't quite as wide as what you typically seem in a sumo stance, and his hand placement was fairly wide— just inside his knees. This contradicts conventional sumo deadlifting due to the fact that the narrow foot placement and wide grip doesn't appear to make the best use of that style. If you're unaware, the primary directive of sumo deadlifting is to reduce the bar path to the shortest possible distance, and is for that reason often decried by weak people as providing sumo lifters with an unfair advantage. Coan apparently didn't give a shit what people thought about his form, because he experimented until he happened upon the unique form that produced deadlifts that may never be exceeded. An interesting postscript to the Coan story is that he switched to conventional late in his career, apparently due to an injury. This is why his deadlift at 252 was lower than his deadlift at 220. His conventional form was just as unorthodox as his sumo form, however, as all he seems to have done is placed his hand where his shins had touched the bar previously, and his shins where he'd formerly gripped the bar. Thus, instead of taking a narrow sumo stance with a wide grip, he took a wide conventional stance with a slightly wide grip.

These examples should point you to one inalienable fact— the basic structure of body has little to do with the form you should utilize to maximize your deadlift. Instead, you should employ whatever form you find to be most comfortable after experimenting with them both. If you have comparatively long arms and a short torso, guess what? It doesn't mean you should deadlift with a certain form— it means you're destined to be a badass deadlifter if you bust your ass at the lift. Any attempt to analyze leverages to determine your best style is absurd for a multitude of reasons:

- It fails to consider a wide array of biochemical and biomechanical variances between humans as I mentioned above.
- It fails to account for past activities in which you might have engaged that would increase your neurological adaptations to certain movements.
- It overthinks what will essentially amounts to a battle of wills between you and the weight. All of the leverages in the world won't get 600 pounds off the ground if you don't hate the fact that the weight is defying your will.

One caveat to this is for chicks— I think females are likely more suited to sumo deadlifting because the structure of their hips allows them to comfortably spread their legs wider. Between the greater angle of their pelvis and the pelvis's enlarged size, sumo seems to be a better choice for women just from a structural standpoint. Additionally, they're almost invariably lower-body dominant, and the sumo deadlift employs far more of your vastus medialis, vastus lateralis, and (oddly) your tibialis anterior than does the conventional deadlift (Escamilla). One other thing I think makes the sumo deadlift a better choice for women is the fact that, due to their hips, squatting with a wide stance generally results in a massive increase in a female lifter's squat, and most of the high-level female squatters I've seen seem to use a wide stance. That stance and strength can translate well to the sumo deadlift, which as Ed Coan put it, amounts to a reverse squat (Gallagher 61). That doesn't necessarily mean chicks can't pull well conventional or shouldn't try, but rather that I think they'd likely find sumo to feel more natural as a movement than conventional and they would likely find that they're stronger with that form as a general rule.

Lest you wring your hands and pout due to the frustration of having to think for yourself on picking a style, author and lifter Derek Barker had a great idea on how to determine it. He suggests you do Louie Simmons' five week deadlift program twice, using conventional form once and sumo the other. Thereafter, you can examine your progress with each and choose the style that best suits you.

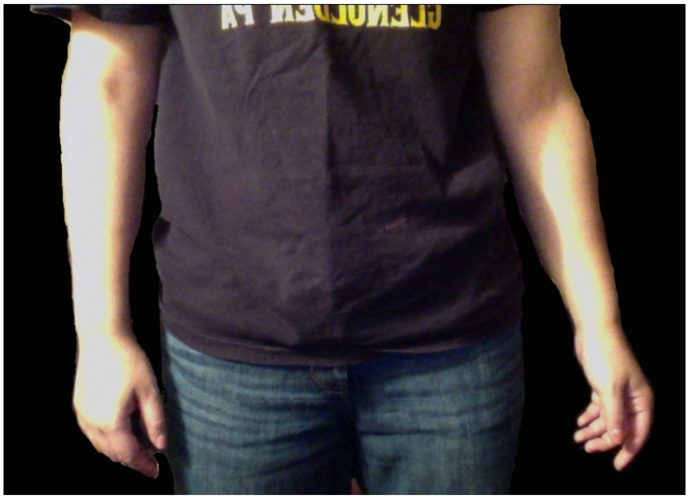
In Barker's words:

> "The program started with the lifter having achieved a max single in the deadlift coming into the program. In the first week, the lifter was then to perform 15 singles with 65 percent of that single with short rest periods. For the next week, the percentage was raised five percent and the [number of singles] dropped to 12. This goes on until the fifth week when the lifter has reached 85 percent and performs six singles.
>
> I feel this program is vastly superior to any other for new lifters because by using weights in this percent range, the lifter is able to focus on his technique and think through the lift rather than get all psyched up and possibly miss or just muscle the barbell up. In addition, weights of 85-100 percent for a new lifter may in fact reinforce bad technique rather than correct it. In the sixth week, the lifter should attempt a new max in the deadlift.
>
> Here's my advice— for the first training wave, pull conventional. Play around with the conventional stance and find what suits you best (shoulder width stance, very close heels touching, feet angled out). Experiment and find an optimal pulling stance.
>
> After a new max has been attempted and hopefully achieved in week six, start the cycle over, this time with a sumo stance. Again, experiment with foot stance such as an ultra wide sumo or a more moderate sumo. Play around with the angle of the feet. A good rule of thumb is to have them angled out at least 45 degrees to keep your center of gravity as close to the barbell as possible. Go through the cycle, and on the sixth week, attempt a max with the sumo stance. Now, you've spent three concentrated months on your deadlift, so you should have a good idea what your particular strengths and weaknesses are with each and what style allows you to lift the most weight. Regardless of which style you choose, it's important to still train the opposite style at some point. One style will help the other" (Barker).

Utilizing the advice above, you will at the very least determine which style suits you best from a comfort standpoint. By comfort, I don't mean that you should feel like you're ensconced in a velvety overstuffed couch while pulling— I mean the one that seems to strain a specific body part the least, and that flows the smoothest. I personally lack the hip flexibility to get into the starting position for the sumo deadlift without incurring a considerable amount of pain, which is one of the reasons why I pull conventional, for instance. After 6 weeks of each form, you should determine which style of pull leaves you crippled and which gives you the greatest PRs.

One form question few people ask, though I think is the cause of many of the torn biceps you see in deadlifting, is in regards to the grip one takes. Years ago, I had someone ask me which hand should pronate and which should supinate, and it occurred to me I never gave it any thought. While pondering this, I looked down at my hands, which were hanging at my sides, and realize that the one that was pronated (facing my body) was the one I pronated in the deadlift, and vice-versa. Then, I looked at their hands and let them know which hand appeared to be more pronated than the other. If you're unsure about what grip would be best for you, stand with your arms hanging relaxed at your sides and have someone look at them and tell you. It should be fairly apparent. Provided you pronate and supinate your hands correctly and don't start your deadlift with bent arms, you should be able to avoid torn biceps for the duration of your life.

Here's a rather extreme example to show what I mean:



Like I said, a rather extreme example, but it illustrates my point nicely. Given that her left hand naturally supinates, it is the one that should grip the bar underhand. The other hand naturally pronates, and thus should be overhand. I've seen a tremendous amount of dithering in determining which hand should go in which direction, but a simple check of your own hands should answer the question for you quickly and easily.

The greats in deadlifting all appear to have a great deal in common— first, they've all done some ridiculously high volume routines, which would indicate to me that they love lifting more than Lindsay Lohan loves cocaine, they border on self-flagellating-priest style masochism, they're built (to scale) like gorillas, and they actually think about how to make themselves better, rather than consulting with a pack of weak know-nothings on the internet. Asking a kid who's marginally better than you at something about how he got there is about as sensible as a Jew asking a Nazi to hold the oven door for him while he tries to clean its back wall. Don't be stupid. If you read about any of the greats, they didn't get great by following routines prescribed by people weaker than a 19th Century railroader with tuberculosis- they took the advice and followed the routines of exceptionally strong people. Not marginally strong— EXCEPTIONALLY strong.

Ernie Frantz- the guy Ed Coan went to for advice. Dude squatted 516 at 172 when he was 76 years old. Recognize.

Next, stop acting like the land whales you see waddling around the baked goods section of your local supermarket— if you want to be a great deadlifter, you cannot be lazy about it. According to Sakari Selkäinaho, all of the great Finnish deadlifters grew up doing manual labor, which inured their bodies and minds to hard work. Likewise, Bob Peoples was a farmer, Lamar Gant rode his bicycle for extremely long distances and worked as a janitor, Konstantin Konstantinovs grew up doing gymnastics and playing judo in a tiny town in Latvia (which means he's cut more firewood than you've likely ever seen in your life,) and currently works as a bodyguard. This means they were/are all highly conditioned athletes capable of mentally pushing themselves to extremes and possess the physical endurance to do so. Since World of Warcraft doesn't count as GPP, you might want to think about getting off your fat ass and doing some conditioning.

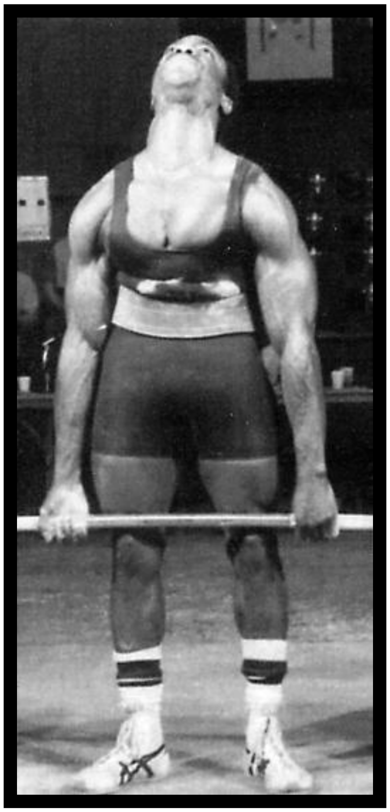
Most, if not all of the best deadlifters have done or do extremely high volume pulling work. You'll see the occasional admonition against overtraining, but the elite conception of overtraining and your conception of overtraining are likely bears as much resemblance to one another as Steve Buscemi bears to a healthy human adult. For instance, Brent Howard's conception of "too much" work mirrors my own experience:

> "I used to do heavy DL, then heavy stiffs, heavy racks, then 15 sets of upper back almost every week. I kept this up until one day when I was lucky enough to have a conversation with Kaz on the subject. He related how he used to beat the heck out of himself with high bar squats of 615 x 25 reps followed by heavy DL's and rack pulls. The bottom line was that was too much even for a superman like him" (Mason).

That's insanely brutal, and likely more volume than you'd get out of three weeks of Starting Strength or two weeks of 5/3/1, in a single day. Chuck Vogelpohl, who pulled 793 at 242, trains ten to fourteen times a week, does abs in every workout, and trains lats in five of those workouts. Louie Simmons does the same thing. Thus, elite lifters know how much is too much because they've traveled a hell of a long ways over that line. Until you've shit upon that line with zero fucks given, then run as far past it as you can brandishing a Viking sword and a bottle of Jägermeister, slaying all weights in your path (until your damnable human vulnerability crushes you like a roach under a steamroller,) you've absolutely no clue what overtraining is. Thus, stop fearing it, since you never even caught a glimpse of the mythical monster you fear.

Those statements made, let's get into some of the greats' deadlifting routines. As a preface I'll mention, anecdotally, that badass pullers have badass routines. Powerlifting legend Ernie Frantz did all three lifts on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, then some light squats and deads on Tuesday. On the heavy days, he hit a heavy single on each lift, in addition to something like walkouts, negatives, or partials thereafter. In the Saturday workout he would go all out (Stone). Finns, who are renowned for their pulling, deadlift two, three, or four times a week, and supplement their deadlifts with Olympic lifts, partials, deadlifts standing on a block, stiff-legged deadlifts of several varieties, and hack deads (Selkäinaho). Bob Peoples deadlifted to max every time he entered the gym. Thus, great powerlifters push the absolute limit and take a giant steaming shit on anyone who tells them otherwise.

THE DEADLIFT PROGRAMS OF THE GREATS



LAMAR GANT

Lamar Gant issued forth from his mother's vagina with both middle fingers pointed at the sky, letting the gods know exactly what he thought about their Jackson Pollack-esque take on his spine. In spite of the fact that Gant's scoliosis appears to have scoliosis and his spine is roughly shaped like a crazy straw, he is perhaps the closest thing we'll ever see to a real-life Spiderman, hitting a 4.95x bodyweight deadlift at two different weight classes. I suppose that was to be expected, given the fact that his weird-assed body shape and diminutive stature made him look like the main character in the movie Antz (the above pic seriously is not photoshopped— he's that weird looking). Gant eventually pulled 638 at 123, boasting 2% body fat, and 654 at 132 (Todd).

His initial deadlift routine consisted of truly insane volume— 25 sets of 5, in what he called his "Monster Man" routine, after doing squat and bench (Todd). On top that, Gant bicycled 30 miles a day to and from work, and cycled for long distances on the weekend (Todd). Eventually, Gant abandoned the aforementioned program, which he'd lifted from professional strongman Harold Ansorge, and developed the program he provided to Powerlifting USA, which I've titled 8/5/3.

Lamar Gant's 8/5/3 Deadlift Program

Week 1: 5 sets of 8 with 70% 1RM

Week 2: 5 sets of 8 with 73% 1RM

Week 3: 5 sets of 8 with 76% 1RM

Week 4: 5 sets of 8 with 78% 1RM

Week 5: 5 sets of 5 with 82% 1RM

Week 6: 5 sets of 5 with 84% 1RM

Week 7: 5 sets of 5 with 86% 1RM

Week 8: 5 sets of 5 with 87% 1RM

Week 9: 5 sets of 3 with 92% 1RM

Week 10: 5 sets of 3 with 94% 1RM

Week 11: 5 sets of 3 with 96% 1RM

Week 12: 5 sets of 3 with 98% 1RM

(Powerliftingwatch)

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KONSTANTIN KONSTANTINOVS

This man needs little introduction. Until Stan Efferding recently topped his total, the twice-named KK reigned supreme at 275 like a modern-day Peter the Great, only without the awesome retinue of drunken bears, midgets, and strippers. He's recently moved to 308 to battle with Andy Bolton for the title of premier hippopotamus-sized deadlifter and has pulled 903 raw, in a tested meet. Unlike what you'd expect from a man who grew up singing the badass Soviet national anthem and likely dreamt of swimming the blood of capitalists every night while wearing hammer-and-sickle pajamas, his program is a bit less regimented than most, and is as follows:

Workout 1

Light squat for a warm up.

Deadlift. Different variation at every session: rack pulls – 7, 11, 15, 20, 23 cm from the knees. Sets consist of either 3 reps or 8-10, depending on how he feels.

Bench press. Bench is a rest between heavy exercises, and they're either done touch and go with a medium grip or paused a close grip pausing at the bottom, and the reps vary on mood and feel. 4. 2nd deadlift. I pull either from a floor or from a deficit (about 9 cm). I do a single set of 2-3 reps pausing at the bottom. Then if I have enough energy, I might do another set of 6-8 reps.

Box squat. Done in a similar fashion to the deadlift.

Workout 2

Medium heavy squat.

Bench press. Work up to single heavy set of 1 x 3. Every two weeks he works up to 1 to 2 sets of single negatives, followed by 1 x 8-10 with either close or medium grip.

Cardio. 15-20 min.

Workout 3

Light squat.

Bench press. 1 x 6-8.

Speed deadlift with bands. 8x1. Bands increase weight by 130 kg at the top.

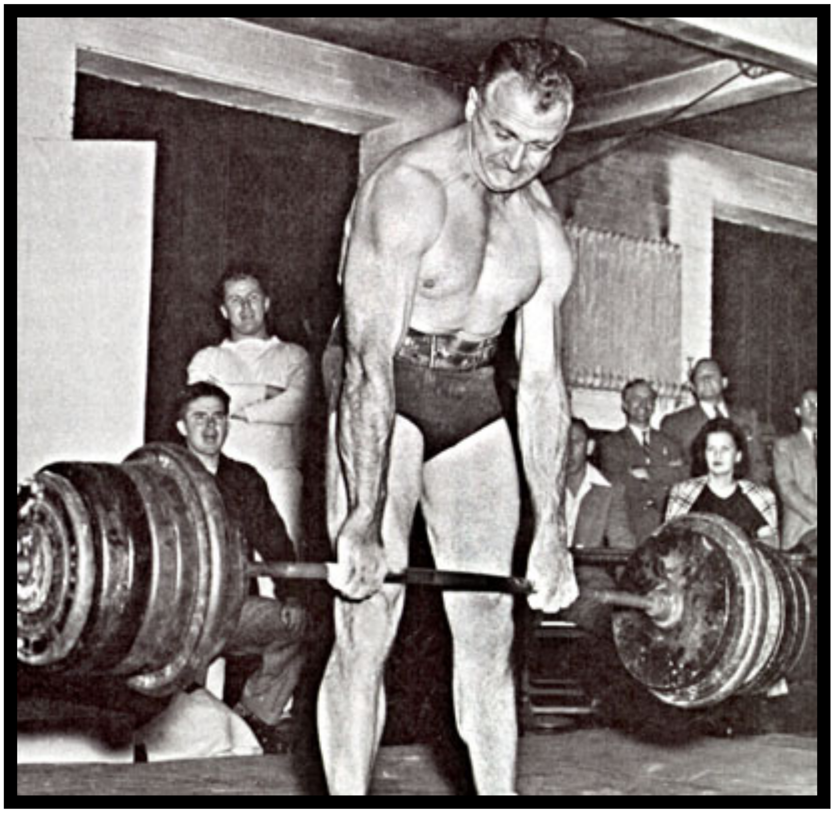
Pull ups with weight or bands. Sets/reps vary, but every rep is explosive to aid deadlift.

GHR, hyperextensions, very heavy abs work. 6 sets of low reps.

Workout 4

Same as workout 2.

KK takes one to two days off between workouts 1 and 2 and 3 and 4, which means he deadlifts between two and four times a week and squats four or five (KK and Carter). Like Andy Bolton, he focuses on explosiveness from the floor in training, but unlike Bolton appears to go fucking heavy. In one video posted online, for instance, he hits 380kg (836 lbs) for four reps.



BOB PEOPLES

To state that Bob Peoples appears to have been obsessed with the deadlift would be and understatement along the lines of stating that Jeffrey Dahmer somewhat enjoyed killing and eating young homosexual men. Peoples was a farmer, working 12 hours a day in backbreaking labor and then devoting multiple hours to honing his deadlifting technique and hammering the shit out of it four to five days a week. In stark contrast to the methods of Westside lifters and just about everyone else in history, Peoples actually maxed out on the deadlift 4-5 times a week (Carson), when he was already light years ahead of the competition in that lift. Due to the fact that he broke his fucking ass at the deadlift and gave zero fucks about what other people were doing, People's pulled a world record 725 at 181 lbs.

You'll notice it doesn't include the bench press, as the bench press was not yet part of all "odd lifts" competitions when Peoples competed.

Bob Peoples' Full Body Routine (done 4-5 times per week)

Deadlift- 1 x 15-20, 1 x 10, 1 x 8, 1 x 6, 6 x 1 (10 sets total)
Squat- 5 x 5
Press- 5 x 5

BENEDIKT MAGNUSSON

Bennie seems like the gentle giant of powerlifting— he's got a baby face, seems overly nice, and has described himself as the smallest and weakest man in his family, which is ridiculous given the fact that he's the size of a small bear (6 feet tall and 380 lbs). He's consistently one of the strongest guys on Earth, and currently holds the world record in the deadlift with a 1015 pull. Note that the workout below is not a static workout— Bennie's much more of the "make it up as you go along" school of programming. Last year, he had this to say about his routine:

> "Right now I have two days a week where I have a planned workout. I rarely miss these. I usually end up working out for most of the other 7 days of the week though, just doing recovery workouts and some bodybuilding stuff to keep the joints feeling healthy and my muscles full. I always try to include heavy behind the neck presses, squats and of course deadlifts in my routine. I feel that these are the exercises that have contributed the most to my progress. I don't really bench though. Flat benching has never felt natural for me and has resulted in several pec tears. I just rely on behind the neck presses and bench warm ups for my bench strength" (Freyr).

Bennie's deadlift workout, from what I found online, generally consists of the following:

Week A

Deadlift- warm up to about 80%; 8 x 2 with 80% 1RM

Deficit deadlift (about 3-4 inch platform)- 4-6 x 4 with 40-70% 1RM, focusing on speed; 2 x 8 with 40-50% 1RM

Week B

Deadlift- Work up to 3rep max.

Deficit deadlift (about 3-4 inch platform)- 4-6 x 3-5 with 50-75% 1RM, focusing on speed; 2 x 8 with 50% 1RM

Week C

Jeff Jet Method Deadlift- Jeff Jet Deadlifts consist of three steps.

Step 1- Do a rack pull from the knees

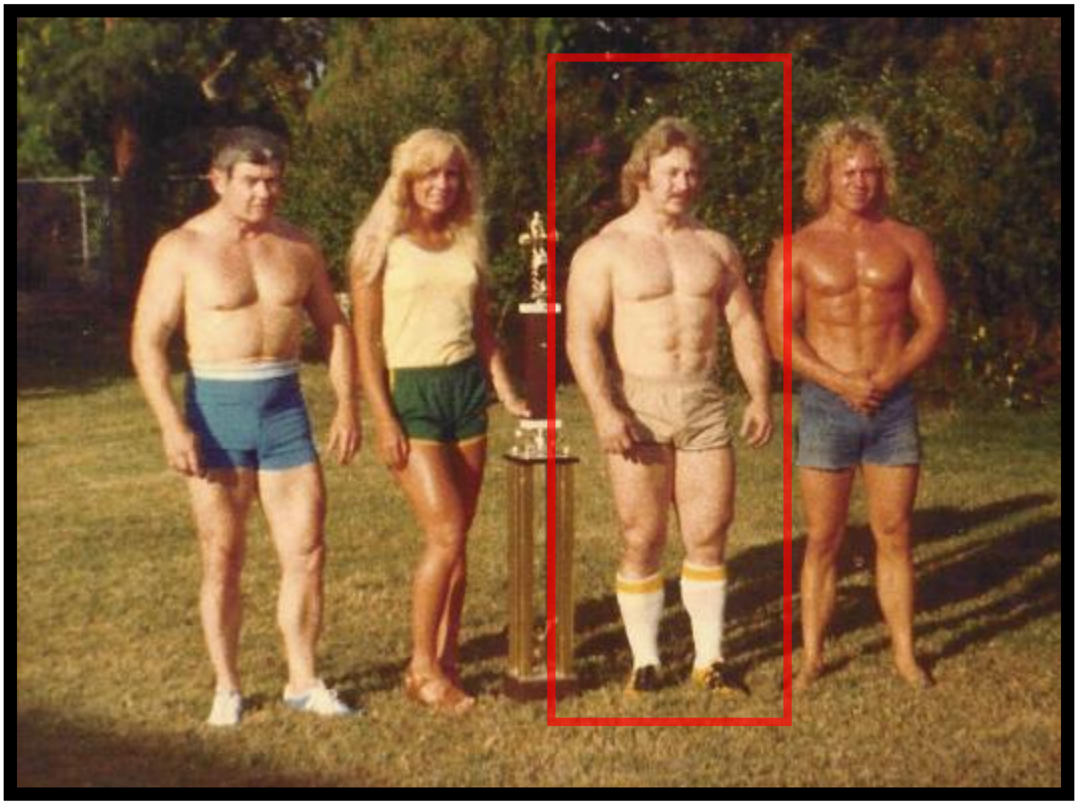
Step 2- Have your training partners remove the blocks/weight stops and do a reverse deadlift (descent followed by ascent), bouncing the weight off the ground.

Step 3- Have your training partners replace the blocks/stops and rack the weight.

Work up to a 1-3 rep max

Deficit deadlift (about 3-4 inch platform)- 4-6 x 4 with 50-60% 1RM

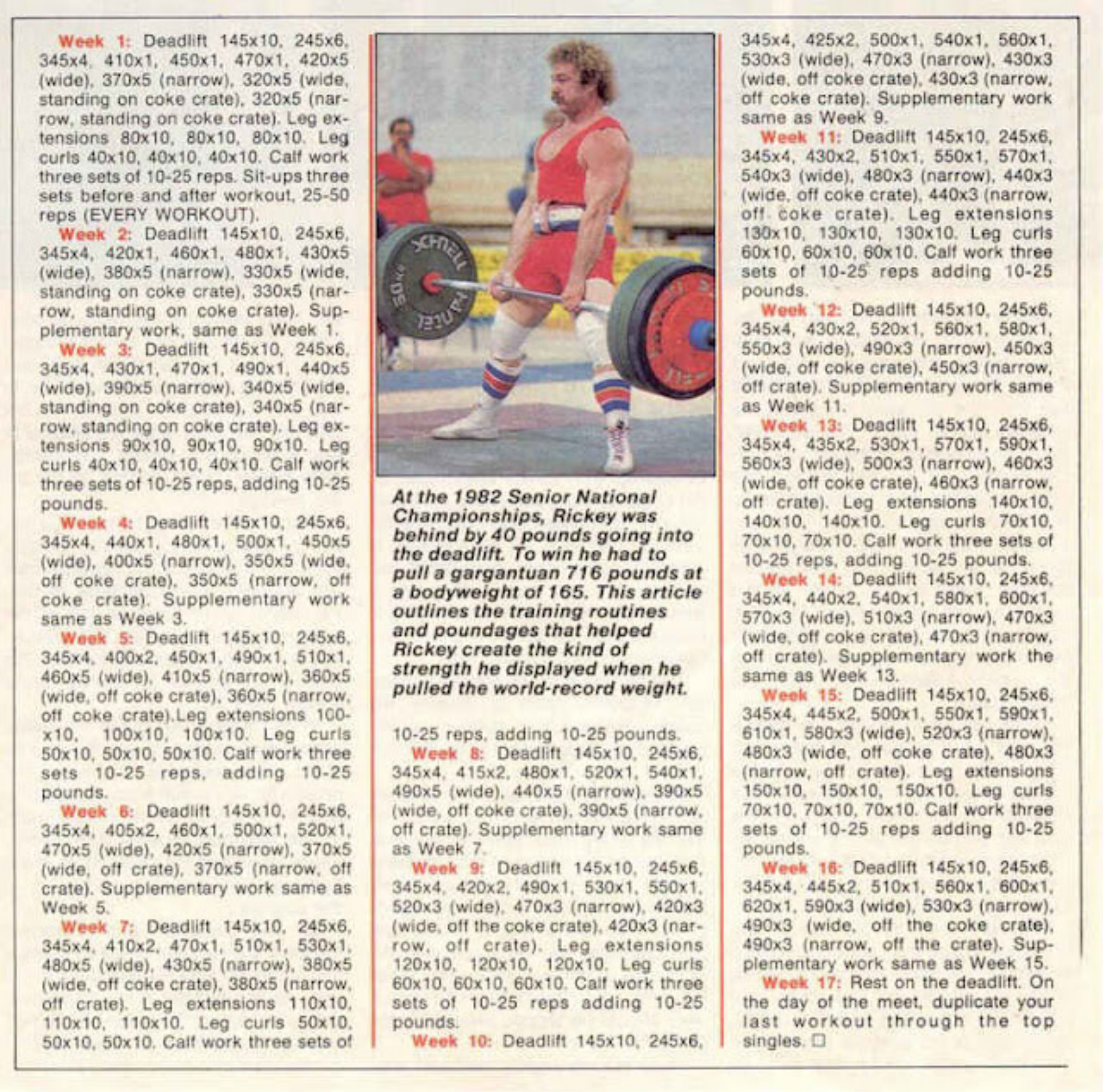
According to the man himself, Bennie and his partners “train deadlift every week. The last 3 or 4 workouts before a meet we just do regular deadlift off the floor and work in singles. We never go heavier than the starting weight at the meet though" (Magnusson).



RICKEY DALE CRAIN

Quite frankly, I'd never heard of the guy, but between his name and the fact that he looks exactly the way his name would indicate, I had to include him. Crain was a bad motherfucker in powerlifting in the 1970s and 80s, and put up some beastly deadlift numbers in the 165 class. Like the rest of the behemoths I'm discussing, Crain was born to deadlift— as you can see from the above pic of his family, he'd likely have had to sleep out back of the double-wide with the dogs if he skipped a day in the gym. According to Clarence Bass, "After teething on a dumbbell-shaped rattle— his father Don was and is an avid lifter— Crain started lifting at age 2, was deadlifting triple bodyweight by the time he was 10, and soon after discovered he had "real" talent in the squat, doing 200 at 13 and 400 before he turned 17— as a 132-pounder. In 1976, at age 23, he became the first middleweight (165 lbs) in history to squat with 700" (Bass). Interestingly to note, Crain hates raw lifting with the burning passion of 1000 suns, and thusly sells a shitload of training gear. I'd post his incoherent rant about how raw lifting is nonsense, but it's in all caps and lacks any semblance of logic, so just take my words for it.

Given his penchant for posting in all caps, rocking an afro and a mustache, his hatred for logic, and his appearance in general, the extremity of his routine should not surprise you, and should serve to drive home the point that the deadlift is clearly not a cerebral lift. This program is designed to end with a 620 pull, according to his site (Crain).



Week 1: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 410x1, 450x1, 470x1, 420x5 (wide), 370x5 (narrow), 320x5 (wide, standing on coke crate), 320x5 (narrow, standing on coke crate). Leg extensions 80x10, 80x10, 80x10. Leg curls 40x10, 40x10, 40x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps. Sit-ups three sets before and after workout, 25-50 reps (EVERY WORKOUT).

Week 2: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 420x1, 460x1, 480x1, 430x5 (wide), 380x5 (narrow), 330x5 (wide, standing on coke crate), 330x5 (narrow, standing on coke crate). Supplementary work, same as Week 1.

Week 3: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 430x1, 470x1, 490x1, 440x5 (wide), 390x5 (narrow), 340x5 (wide, standing on coke crate), 340x5 (narrow, standing on coke crate). Leg extensions 90x10, 90x10, 90x10. Leg curls 40x10, 40x10, 40x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps, adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 4: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 440x1, 480x1, 500x1, 450x5 (wide), 400x5 (narrow), 350x5 (wide, off coke crate), 350x5 (narrow, off coke crate). Supplementary work same as Week 3.

Week 5: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 400x2, 450x1, 490x1, 510x1, 460x5 (wide), 410x5 (narrow), 360x5 (wide, off coke crate), 360x5 (narrow, off coke crate).Leg extensions 100x10, 100x10, 100x10. Leg curls 50x10, 50x10, 50x10. Calf work three sets 10-25 reps, adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 6: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 405x2, 460x1, 500x1, 520x1, 470x5 (wide), 420x5 (narrow), 370x5 (wide, off crate), 370x5 (narrow, off crate). Supplementary work same as Week 5.

Week 7: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 410x2, 470x1, 510x1, 530x1, 480x5 (wide), 430x5 (narrow), 380x5 (wide, off coke crate), 380x5 (narrow, off crate). Leg extensions 110x10, 110x10, 110x10. Leg curls 50x10, 50x10, 50x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps, adding 10-25 pounds.

At the 1982 Senior National Championships, Rickey was behind by 40 pounds going into the deadlift. To win he had to pull a gargantuan 716 pounds at a bodyweight of 165. This article outlines the training routines and poundages that helped Rickey create the kind of strength he displayed when he pulled the world-record weight.

Week 8: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 415x2, 480x1, 520x1, 540x1, 490x5 (wide), 440x5 (narrow), 390x5 (wide, off coke crate), 390x5 (narrow, off crate). Supplementary work same as Week 7.

Week 9: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 420x2, 490x1, 530x1, 550x1, 520x3 (wide), 470x3 (narrow), 420x3 (wide, off the coke crate), 420x3 (narrow, off crate). Leg extensions 120x10, 120x10, 120x10. Leg curls 60x10, 60x10, 60x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 10: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 425x2, 500x1, 540x1, 560x1, 530x3 (wide), 470x3 (narrow), 430x3 (wide, off coke crate), 430x3 (narrow, off coke crate). Supplementary work same as Week 9.

Week 11: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 430x2, 510x1, 550x1, 570x1, 540x3 (wide), 480x3 (narrow), 440x3 (wide, off coke crate), 440x3 (narrow, off coke crate). Leg extensions 130x10, 130x10, 130x10. Leg curls 60x10, 60x10, 60x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 12: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 430x2, 520x1, 560x1, 580x1, 550x3 (wide), 490x3 (narrow), 450x3 (wide, off coke crate), 450x3 (narrow, off crate). Supplementary work same as Week 11.

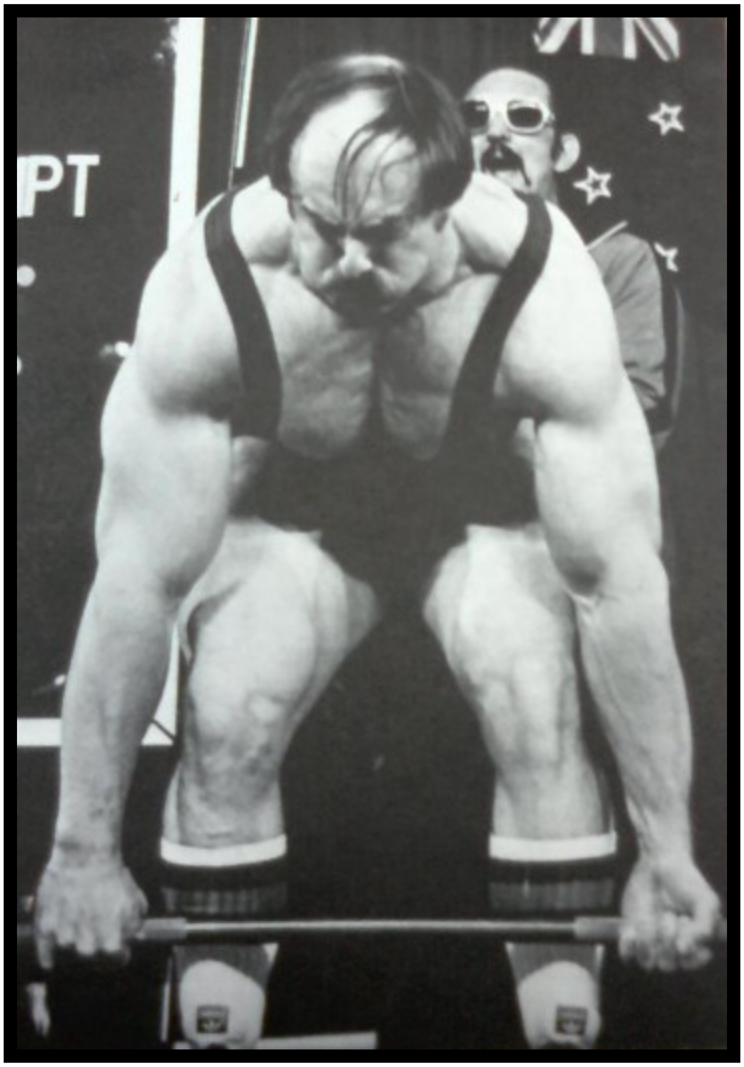
Week 13: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 435x2, 530x1, 570x1, 590x1, 560x3 (wide), 500x3 (narrow), 460x3 (wide, off coke crate), 460x3 (narrow, off crate). Leg extensions 140x10, 140x10, 140x10. Leg curls 70x10, 70x10, 70x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps, adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 14: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 440x2, 540x1, 580x1, 600x1, 570x3 (wide), 510x3 (narrow), 470x3 (wide, off coke crate), 470x3 (narrow, off crate). Supplementary work the same as Week 13.

Week 15: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 445x2, 500x1, 550x1, 590x1, 610x1, 580x3 (wide), 520x3 (narrow), 480x3 (wide, off coke crate), 480x3 (narrow, off crate). Leg extensions 150x10, 150x10, 150x10. Leg curls 70x10, 70x10, 70x10. Calf work three sets of 10-25 reps adding 10-25 pounds.

Week 16: Deadlift 145x10, 245x6, 345x4, 445x2, 510x1, 560x1, 600x1, 620x1, 590x3 (wide), 530x3 (narrow), 490x3 (wide, off the coke crate), 490x3 (narrow, off the crate). Supplementary work same as Week 15.

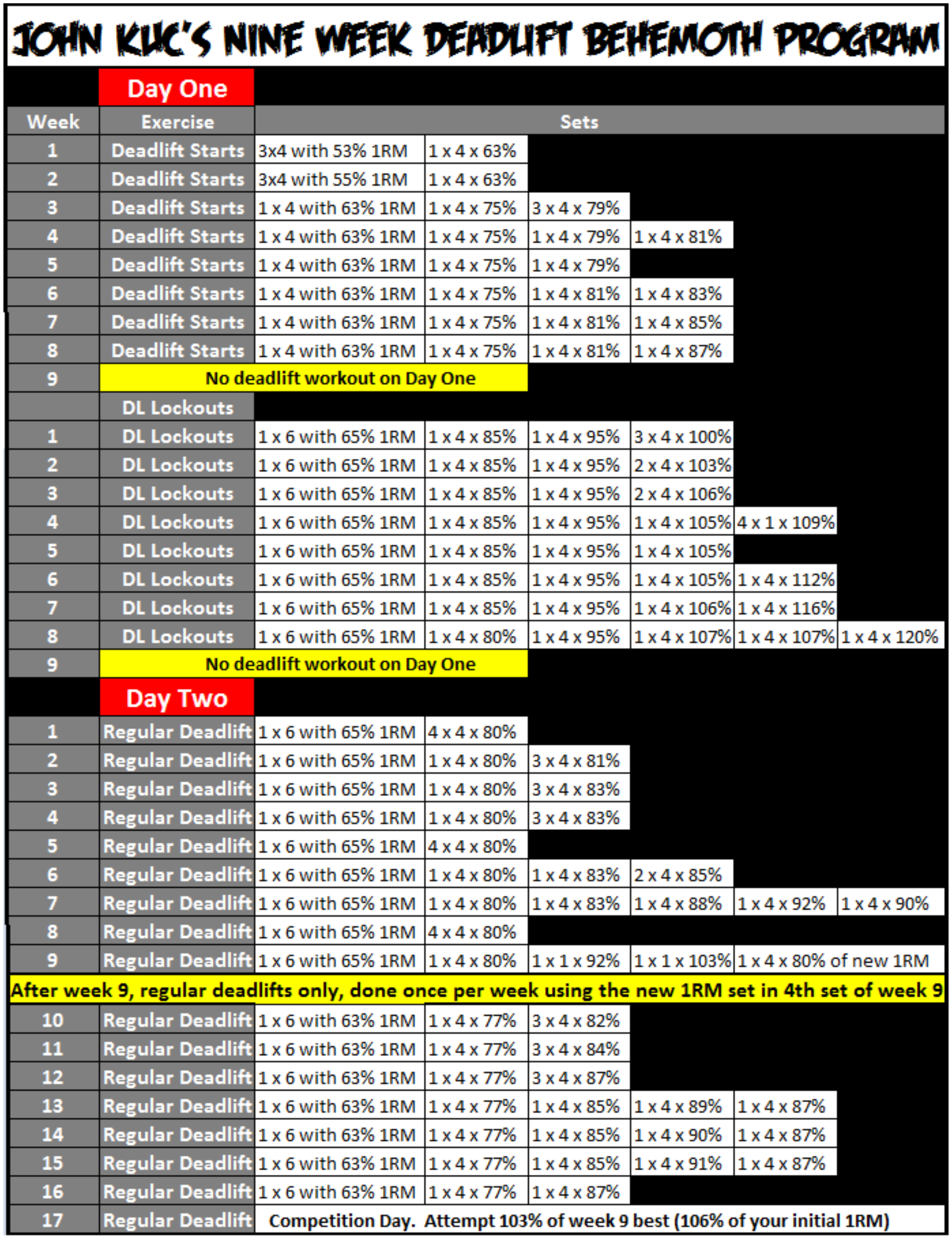
Week 17: Rest on the deadlift. On the day of the meet, duplicate your last workout through the top singles. □



JOHN KUC

John Kuc was also a hilariously mustachioed powerlifter of the 1970s and 80s and was apparently kind enough to step out of his rape van filled with lollipops to show people what's up on the deadlift. His record pull of 870 in the 242s stood for 18 years, until Ed Coan decided he'd go 2 Girls 1 Cup and took a giant steaming shit on it with an 887 pull. Kuc's program is a 16 week competition prep cycle split into two 8 week microcycles, the first consisting of two days a week of pulls and the second consisting of one a week.

As his combover and moustache might already suggest, Kuc was a bit of a controversial character when he competed. From the anecdotes I've read, he was generally respected but apparently not terribly well-liked. He and Doug Young apparently had some beef, though I couldn't find any specifics on why— I simply saw the word "overrated" bandied about quite a bit when Kuc was mentioned. Irrespective of his off-putting appearance, Kuc could rip a weight off the ground like few people have in history.



JOHN KUC'S NINE WEEK DEADLIFT BEHEMOTH PROGRAM

	Day One						
Week	Exercise	Sets					
1	Deadlift Starts	3x4 with 53% 1RM	1 x 4 x 63%				
2	Deadlift Starts	3x4 with 55% 1RM	1 x 4 x 63%				
3	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	3 x 4 x 79%			
4	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	1 x 4 x 79%	1 x 4 x 81%		
5	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	1 x 4 x 79%			
6	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	1 x 4 x 81%	1 x 4 x 83%		
7	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	1 x 4 x 81%	1 x 4 x 85%		
8	Deadlift Starts	1 x 4 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 75%	1 x 4 x 81%	1 x 4 x 87%		
9	No deadlift workout on Day One						
	DL Lockouts						
1	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	3 x 4 x 100%		
2	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	2 x 4 x 103%		
3	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	2 x 4 x 106%		
4	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	1 x 4 x 105%	4 x 1 x 109%	
5	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	1 x 4 x 105%		
6	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	1 x 4 x 105%	1 x 4 x 112%	
7	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 95%	1 x 4 x 106%	1 x 4 x 116%	
8	DL Lockouts	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	1 x 4 x 95%	1 x 4 x 107%	1 x 4 x 107%	1 x 4 x 120%
9	No deadlift workout on Day One						
	Day Two						
1	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	4 x 4 x 80%				
2	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	3 x 4 x 81%			
3	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	3 x 4 x 83%			
4	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	3 x 4 x 83%			
5	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	4 x 4 x 80%				
6	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	1 x 4 x 83%	2 x 4 x 85%		
7	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	1 x 4 x 83%	1 x 4 x 88%	1 x 4 x 92%	1 x 4 x 90%
8	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	4 x 4 x 80%				
9	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 65% 1RM	1 x 4 x 80%	1 x 1 x 92%	1 x 1 x 103%	1 x 4 x 80% of new 1RM	
After week 9, regular deadlifts only, done once per week using the new 1RM set in 4th set of week 9							
10	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	3 x 4 x 82%			
11	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	3 x 4 x 84%			
12	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	3 x 4 x 87%			
13	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 89%	1 x 4 x 87%	
14	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 90%	1 x 4 x 87%	
15	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	1 x 4 x 85%	1 x 4 x 91%	1 x 4 x 87%	
16	Regular Deadlift	1 x 6 with 63% 1RM	1 x 4 x 77%	1 x 4 x 87%			
17	Regular Deadlift	Competition Day. Attempt 103% of week 9 best (106% of your initial 1RM)					

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ED COAN

By now, you should know who Ed Coan is. If you need a refresher, skip back to the benching section. In any event, his deadlift routine is one of the most jerked off to programs on the internet, and I'm endlessly amused by the dogmatism that surrounds it. If you are one of the people who worship the Coan-Phillippi routine and consider it sacrosanct, consider then this— that's not Ed Coan's year round routine. According to the much vaunted Coan-Philippi routine, you'll do a single set of 2 and then some speed deads and good mornings. That is nothing whatsoever like what he actually did. From the lips of Ed Coan to your proverbial ears:

> "Friday is deadlifts and all back work. This Friday, since it's off season, with no belt or anything, I'm deadlifting off a 4-inch block. It actually teaches you to push more with your legs since you have to bend over so much farther. It's a lot fucking harder!
>
> Most powerlifters I know who no longer compete, they'll squat and bench, but won't deadlift! It's too difficult. Then I do stiff-legged deads off the blocks, then rows, regular pulldowns, then some type of Hammer pull-down machine, like high rows. Afterward, I'll do chins for reps, then bent-over laterals. I do my rear delts on back day."(Koenig)

Coan's "2,500 Pounds and Beyond" Workout (Colescott)

Monday

Squats- 7-10 x 2-8
Leg Extensions- 2 x 10-12
Leg Curls- 2 x 10-12

- In the off-season, Coan added high bar squats to activate more of the quads and sometimes front squats after that for more quad work.

Seated Calf Raises- 3 x 10-12

Tuesday- Rest

Wednesday
Bench Press (regular grip)- 7-10 x 2-8
Wide-Grip Bench- 3 x 8-10
Incline Dumbell or Barbell Press- 2 x 2-8
Dumbbell Flies- 2 x 10-15
Tricep Extensions- 2 x 2-8

Thursday- Rest

Friday
Regular Deadlifts or Stiff-Legged Deadlifts- 8 x 2-8
Bent-Over Rows- 2 x 8-10 (Before you tell yourself you're good at these or using plenty of weight, Coan did these with 485 lbs. for 8 strict reps)
Pulley Rows- 2 x 8-10
Pulldowns- 2 x 8-10
Hammer Strength Back Machine- 2 x 8-10
Rear Delt Raises- 2 x 10-12

Saturday
Close-Grip Bench- 3 x 8-10
Shoulder Press- 5 x 2-8 (Choose between Behind-the-Neck Press, Front Military Press, or Seated Dumbbell Presses.)
Side Laterals- 3 x 10-12
Pushdowns- 3 x 8-10
Light Barbell Curls- 1 x 20

Sunday- Rest

JULIA ZAUGOLOVA

It's pretty rare that one runs across a female powerlifter who you could simultaneously describe as cute, jacked, and a beast. Julia Zaugolova, however, is one of the feew and the proud. In addition to being spectacularly good looking and ripped to the bone, the Russian broad with the unpronounceable name recently crushed the record at 148 for the raw deadlift, pulling an unreal 529 lbs. Though I could not find much in the way of a routine on her, I did discover two interesting thing— one, she deadlifts with high reps in training. In one video online, she pulled 330 for 20 (63% of her 1RM), and in another she pulled 352 for 10 (67% of her 1RM). There is nothing more horrible than high-rep deadlifting, in my mind. It's an activity only for the type of extreme masochist that enjoys a good flogging with barbed wire and a subsequent salt rub, but it will certainly separate the men from the boys and the Russian female deadlifter from just about any man you find in America.

The second interesting facet of her training is that Zaugolova appears to train with conventional form unless she's going for a max single. In most of the training videos I saw, she pulled conventional, as for one in which she pulled 562 in training with sumo form. Frankly, I'd never considered attempting such a thing, but it is essentially the same as utilizing a close or reverse grip in bench training and then using a conventional grip for competition.

Competition:

Городская газета
ПЛАНЕТА
FANAC
DEPO29

Training:

Zaugolova's methods in this seems to echo the sentiments of the Finn deadlifters, who as you'll recall train every conceivable variety of pull as often as they can possibly manage.

WRAPPING UP THE ROUTINES OF THE GREATS

If you hadn't noticed in the preceding pages, a cursory overview of their stances, grips, and routines will clue you into one profound fact— even the best pullers on Earth, people designed by the gods specifically for deadlifting, cannot agree on a single program or technique that's universally best for success. They all seem experiment in ways that would bring a smile to mad scientists like Nikola Tesla, however, and throw themselves bodily into their training. A couple of commonalities jump of the preceding pages if you look closely, though, and they are as follows. If you want to be a deadlift master, you must adhere to the following golden rules:

- **Don't be a pussy**.
- **Condition yourself to handle brutally heavy workloads**, especially for your legs and back, both in and out of the gym. This means general physical preparation activities are your friends, and pushing the prowler a couple of times a week could mean the difference between winning handily and having your ass handed to you on the platform.
- **Pull like a 15 year old with the internet, Jergens, and a fistful of cock**. The more you pull, the better you'll get at it. Add a death set at the end of your deadlift sessions to inure yourself to the oft-despised-though-it-should be appreciated grey-out. Greying out at the end of a heavy deadlift should be a matter of course— if you train to embrace it with death sets using 50-60% of your one rep max at the end of a session, you'll not fear the grey-out as much and will learn to push through it. The grey-out is your friend— it tells you that your reward for pushing yourself to the absolute limit is a nap. A word of advice, however— when you notice your vision narrowing and know the grey-out is coming on, drop to a squat and take deep breaths when you drop the bar. Do not try to walk off the platform, as you'll likely smash your face open on something hard and metal. If you're not graying out on a one rep max or death set, you can be 100% sure you didn't go hard enough.
- **Test yourself**. You'll never know how much is too much until you actually do too much. Once you determine how much is too much, do a little less than that.
- **Don't forget to not be a pussy**. 90% of deadlifting is a combination of hate for failure and big brass balls. The remaining 10% is technique.

TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR DEADLIFT EVEN MORE DEADLY

Before I jump into my technique tips, favorite routines, and favorite assistance lifts, I'll mention that I agree with Louie Simmons on at least one thing— "deadlift" as much as you can every week. That's not to say you're actually going to deadlift, but you would be doing something to help your deadlift nearly every day. Chuck Vogelpohl was famous for hitting the gym 10-14 times per week, hitting abs every time and lats five times a week (Simmons). He did this to build a base for deadlifting, and to keep his body conditioned to the incredible stress deadlifting puts on your body. Though I had no knowledge of his routine previously, he and I are pretty much two tits in a bikini top on this issue, since I do something very similar. I do a combination of weighted and unweighted ab work at least 4x per week, upper back work in my morning workouts in the form of face pulls, pull ups, high cable rows, or behind the neck pulldowns with a narrow grip, and hit back very heavily at least twice per week with one of the exercises listed in this section.

My Deadliest Deadlift Routines

Over the last 20 or so years, I've tried more permutations of programming than any neophyte could possibly imagine. Given that the deadlift was my pet exercise for the better part of those 20 years, I've more or less acted like Pepe LePiew with the deadlift, and have come up with more rape and stalking strategies (for the deadlift) than he did for cartoon broads. That is to say, a fucking lot of them. My favorite deadlift workout, though, would have to be one of the following two. The first was one I used, religiously getting to a 500+ deadlift about ten years ago at a bodyweight of around 160, and the latter is one up with which I came in 2009 out of a combination of masochism and boredom.

TO THE DEATH

At the time, I had about a 500 lb deadlift. For the warmup weights, adjust downward if your deadlift is considerably less than that so that you get four warmup sets that are relatively equally spaced in weight jumps.

Deadlift

1x5x135
1x5x225
1x5x315
1x5x405
6-8 x 3 - 1 x 435-455 (between 85 and 90% of your 1RM)

I started with 435 for three and then added weight depending on whether or not I got three reps. After the first set, I'd get as many as I could. If I couldn't get more than one, I'd use that for the remainder of the sets. Thus, once I got to 455 I went until it got nearly impossible to finish a rep, which was around the 6th set. When you're hitting 8 singles with 90% of your 1RM with no problem and no more than 120 second rests between pulls, increase your starting weight by 5 to 10 lbs.

Death Set: Max reps on deadlift x 315 (63% of my 1RM at the time)

My record was somewhere around 20, at which point I usually greyed out and slumped to the floor. The death set is an indispensible method for getting good at the deadlift. If you're avoiding it, that avoidance stems from fear. Face your fear and attack ~60% of your one rep max with all of the fury of a Viking berserker storming a beach after rowing over rough seas for 5 days. You're cold, wet, tired, and fucking PISSED. Get angry at the weight and make it your punk bitch.

REST WHEN YOU'RE DEAD

Deadlift (Weights for ~600lb max)

1x1x135
1x1x225
1x1x315
1x1x405
Max x 1 x 515 in 30 minutes. You will have to watch the clock on this one and deadlift for exactly 30 minutes. You'll pull 85-90% of your 1RM as many times as I could. Once I got comfortable with this type of routine, I began pulling doubles and triples at the outset, then dropped to singles to keep the pace quick. Once you're hitting between 20 and 25 reps (use your judgment on this one), raise the weight. This routine will condition you like no other, and enabled me to pull high percentages of my one rep max with no warmup whatsoever. While doing this routine on a regular basis, I pulled 515 easily on a cold day in jeans and a hoodie with no warmup whatsoever to prove a point to a guy to whom I was talking. When I mean you'll be highly conditioned for pulling, I mean *highly* conditioned.

RUNNING THE LADDER

I did this program a great deal in my early years after picking it up from an Iron Man magazine and used it for both the squat and the deadlift. It raised both considerably. Due to the volume, I would not recommend doing deadlifts more than once a week with this routine. Assuming a 405 max (which is what I had at the time at a bodyweight of 134), I did the following. The weights are not so important as the rep scheme, incidentally.

1 x 10 x 135
1 x 8 x 225
1 x 6 x 275
1 x 4 x 315
1 x 2 x 355
1 x 2 x 365-375
1 x 4 x 315
1 x 6 x 285
1 x 8 x 265
1 x 10 x 225

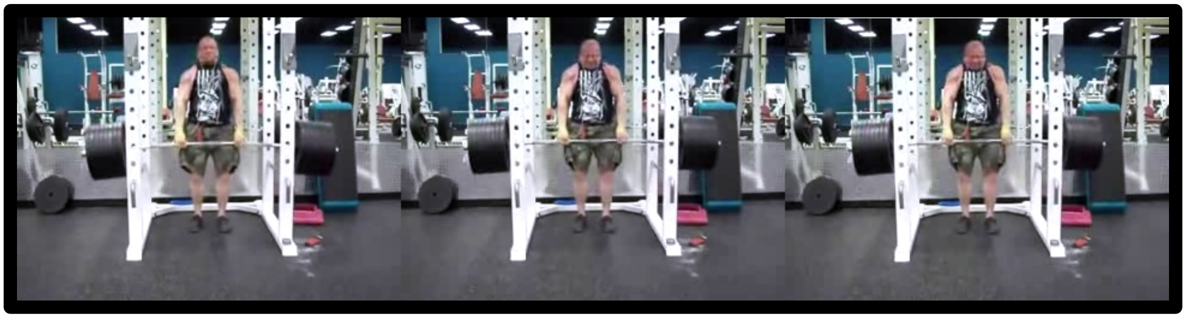
The key in this routine is to make sure that your second half of the ladder is noticeably heavier than the first half. It's great for breaking plateaus and ruts, and also for getting your comfortable with your form on the deadlift.

The Deadliest Assistance Movements

The following are my favorite accessory movements for the deadlift. I'm not going to get into the biomechanics of each, as doing so is generally the purview of people who fail to realize that the biomechanics are going to range from subtly to wildly different for each lifter based on their leverages, relative muscular strengths, and individual technique variations. You'll also note that the very same people who will babble on about the biomechanics of lifts are generally shitty lifters hiding behind textbooks. They're little more capable in terms of educating someone on the proper methods for completing an elite level lift than is a man who's read a shitload of carpentry books but barely touched a hammer would be if he were to educate you on the whys and wherefores of mansion construction.

What I do when selecting an accessory exercise is examine movements that resemble my main lift in whole or part and then incorporate that movement to shore up weak points and strengthen my overall support structure. This means I'm using my brain to determine for myself which exercise is best, rather than nitpicking pointless minutia and dithering over physiological and neurological responses to various loading protocols in sundry angles to facilitate the greatest hypertrophy, or whatever it is people do rather than actually lift weights. Additionally, I will modify my form and range of motion on those assistance exercises to further compound the benefit derived therefrom, after, of course, a period of experimentation. The following are exercises I've found that help my deadlift of late. It is in no way a comprehensive list, nor any sort of a bible you should follow religiously, but it might give you some ideas.

In Order of Awesome...



Shrugs/ Rack Pulls. Anyone who's seen me in person will tell you that the first thing they notice, aside from my astonishingly smashed nose and scarred face, are my traps. The mountains on either side of my ears have risen to their current state of awesome by the rigorous and religious application of shrugs. I could not love a human baby as much as I love shrugs. As such, I've embarked upon a neck holocaust the likes of which the world will never see again. I do these as a combination rack pull from knee height and shrug to get in extra pulling work, and I use my exact deadlift stance and grip width. I always use straps on these, however, and pull double overhand. Before you scream "That's bullshit!", simmer the fuck down and consider the following:

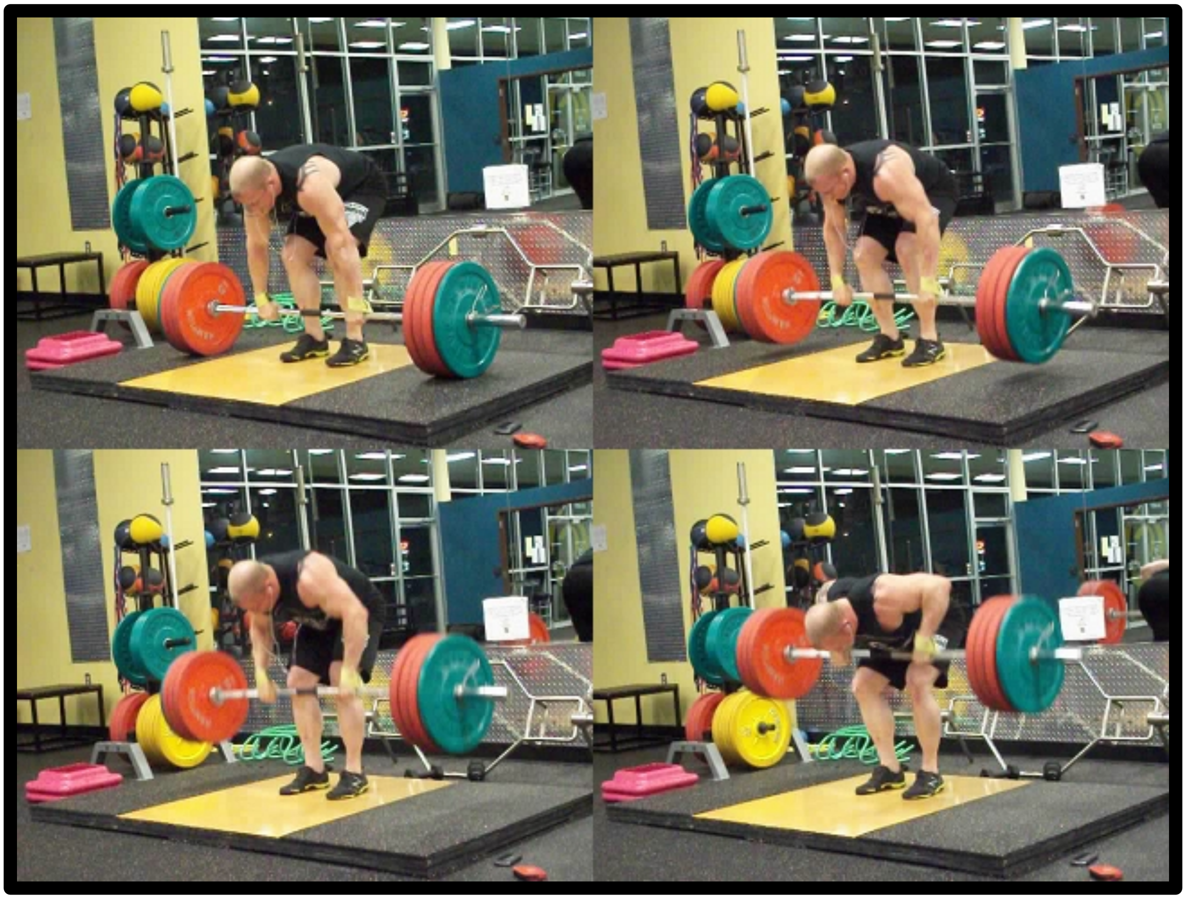
- I have tiny little rat claws for hands. Thus, I am not designed for hand strength competitions.
- I have no interest in joining Diesel Crew nor any other hand strength specialist team.
- I use Spud straps, which effectively make this a fat bar pull. This, in turn, improves my grip.
- Powerlifting doesn't have a fucking grip event.
- I've never failed a pull because of my grip.

If any of the above don't apply to you, feel free to do shrugs without straps. I, however, do not see the benefit in drastically reducing my shrug weight and drastically increasing the possibility of a bicep tear for a dubious and marginal increase in my grip strength. Play the percentages and ignore the assholes who tell you otherwise. Any time you see someone decrying the use of straps on a heavy pull, it's jealousy motivating his comments. Make no fucking mistake about that.

Recommended rep range: 2-10. Singles are more for fun than anything else on traps, and anything over 10 is cardio. That said, I will do higher reps in my warmup sets as a goof, just to embarrass other guys in the gym with the fact that I can do 30 reps with weights they cannot get off the pins.

Form tips: The recent spate of form Nazi nonsense on the internet has me perplexed, as it's people with no qualifications or authority of any kind critiquing the form of strangers who are generally stronger than them. In regards to shrugs, there is no "correct" form, as it's not a competition lift. That stated, here are my recommendations:

- **Do both strict and "power" shrugs**. The term "power" shrugs is a bit of an annoyance to me because shrugs should necessarily be powerful, but in this, I mean stiff-legged and shrugs with some body English. I think my shrugs have actually increased more since I switched to stiff-legged form, but I had to make the switch because I cannot fit any more weight onto the bar. There is certainly merit to using body English to move the weight, and even max singles where you just hold the weight for time will do more for you than high rep strict sets. Thus, mix it up.
- **Do static holds with weight you can't actually shrug**. You will never be sorer in your life. If you make this a competition between you and your friends, you're guaranteed to get bigger and insanely sore, as well as to see one or more of you pass out altogether, which is always amusing.
- **Don't roll your shoulders**. It had to have been a bodybuilder who propagated the nonsense that rolling your shoulders is best practice. It's not. Move your shoulders straight up and down.
- **Any movement of your shoulders past full downward extension is technically a shrug**. This means any upward movement of your shoulders with a heavy weight in your hands will increase strength and size. I would not recommend a program of naught but micro-shrugs, but those tiny reps will eventually lead to impressive ones. Save them for the end of your workout, though.



Bent Row. I've done a wide array of bent over rows over the years, and recently have started doing what some would call a Pendlay row and what others will nitpick to death. I could care less what you fuckers call it, but this is the form I've found to be most beneficial for the deadlift. Pendlay didn't invent them, and his take on the row is simply one of many. The rows with which he's credited differ from what one would typically call a bent row for a couple of reasons:

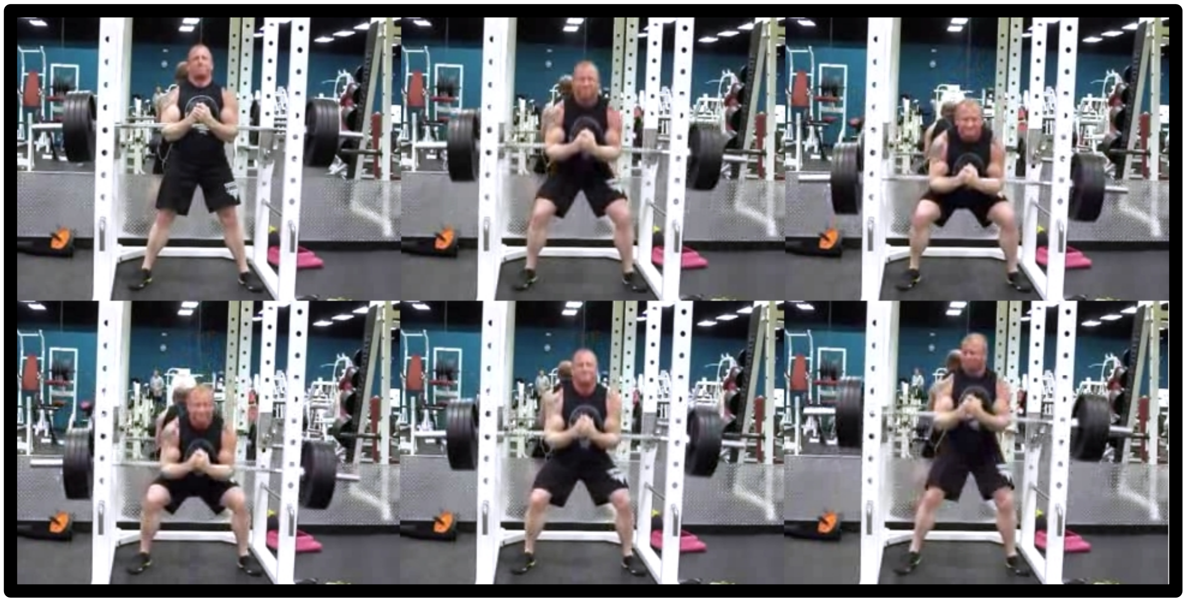
- They begin on the floor.
- You attempt to maintain parallel posture to the floor (though a bit of body English is inevitable if you're adhering to the next principle tenet of the lift).
- The lift is done *explosively*. I generally bruise my sternum when I do these, as the point is to pull the bar as hard as possible from the floor into your sternum.
- You pull to your sternum rather than your stomach.
- You drop the bar to the ground rather than doing a controlled negative.

Recommended rep range: 1-5. I generally stick with triples, but there's something to be said for the occasional single.

Form tips: I take *exactly the stance and grip width I'll use on deadlifts*, and then I pull the bar like I'm trying to rip it through my solar plexus into my spine, and finish by essentially dropping it to the floor. In doing so, I use as little upper body motion as possible with the maximum weight I can handle. The key here is the following equation:

VIOLENCE + HEAVY WEIGHT = AWESOME

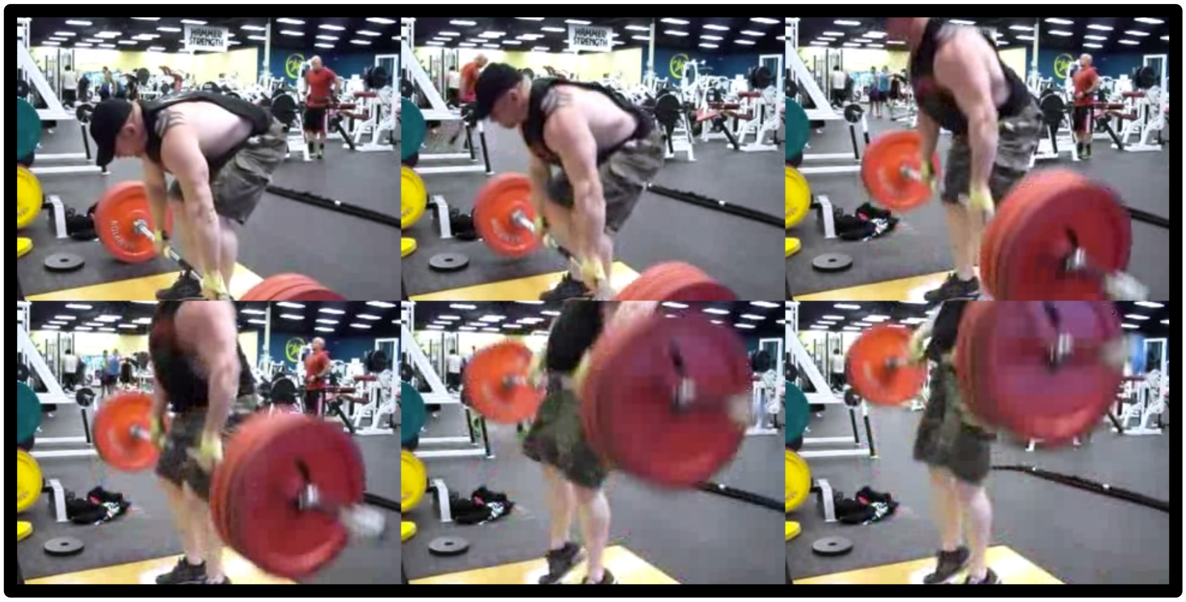
I've found this has helped my pull from the floor tremendously, and I regard pretty much any weight on the deadlift under 600 with utter contempt since I've begun doing these on a regular basis. Bent rows are to Olympic lifters and powerlifters what Coco Austin is to both black and white men— beloved by all. They're also one of the mainstays of the much ballyhooed Coan/Phillippi program and a major part of what Ed Coan actually did when he trained for deadlifting, so they're certainly worth doing.



Zercher Squats. Interestingly, this is one of Louie Simmons' pet lifts, and he's even built a harness with which to do these so his lifters with bicep tears can rock out with their cocks out (or if they're chicks, their baby cocks.) These definitely build upper back strength, in addition to beating on your abs they're trash cans in "Stomp." I do these out of the rack or off the pins, depending on my mood, and have taken to calling partial Zerchers off the pins "Tombstones." I guess due to the fact that they make me feel like I've going to fucking die, and because it mimics the action of ripping a tombstone out of the ground with your bare hands.

Recommended rep range: 1-4. I despise doing these for reps, mostly due to the fact that it's hard to breathe. By the end of a rep-alicious set, they're about as anaerobic as can be, because I'm definitely ready to pass the fuck out.

Form tips: This exercise couldn't be much more simple. The full lift is done as a deadlift to the floor, whereupon you place the weight in your lap, hook your arms beneath it and then stand. I prefer doing them out of the rack, however, as I can handle more weight that way and have no immediate plans to compete in the USAWA (the only odd-lifts federation in the US and damned interesting to check out. Google them.) In any event, I take what amounts to a sumo stance after unracking it, then descent until my elbows touch my thighs, then ascend. I do not pad the bar, as it limits the amount of weight you can hold (it forces your arm to open up and reduces the amount of isometric force your bicep can generate.) Just suck it up and the pain will go away in a couple of weeks. For rack Zerchers, try setting the pins at a variety of heights and do everything from bottom-position pulls (great for the start of your deadlift) to the lockout.



Stiff-Leg High Pull. I love these and do them every so often, although I think I started doing them based on a misunderstanding of an exercise description in an article I can no longer find. In any event, these definitely seem to transfer into a shitload of explosiveness off the floor, and they didn't hurt my knee when my patello-femoral tendonitis was acting like a bastard. As such, I hammered the fuck out of these for a while, to seemingly good effect. Like the aforementioned exercises, I used the same stance and grip width as my deadlift, then with more legs more or less straight pulled the bar as violently as I could, as high as I could. My goal here was to increase my break speed off the ground, in addition to strengthen my upper back to compensate for the end of my deadlift, when my shoulders round and my legs are nearly locked out.

Recommended rep range: 1-3.

Form tips: This is not an Olympic lift. There are not two pulls— there is but one. The point here is to generate as much force ripping the bar off the ground as possible so that it goes as high as possible. You're not racking it, and you're not catching it in a snatch, so the only position about which you need to worry is the start. The key is to get the bar as close to your shins as humanly possible. Again, I use the same stance and grip width as I use in the regular deadlift.

Filling in the Rest of the Blanks on the Deadlift

The above exercises can serve as alternatives to the deadlift, but aren't true assistance movements to fill in the blanks on things the deadlift misses or requires. Basically, the deadlift and the aforementioned exercises are the cars that can get you to the party, but you're not going to get laid if you try to take someone home in a stripped-down beast of a vehicle that lacks the finer touches like a stereo, seats, and air conditioning. Thus, include:

- **Grip training**. The manner in which you train grip matters far less than the fact that you train it in the first place. I like doing standing wrist curls holding the barbell as I would if I were doing a double-overhand deadlift at the top of the movement. I really only train the wrist flexors (the underside of the forearm), as I get a lot of knotting in my extensors if I train them too heavily or frequently.
- **Biceps**. They're not the sole purview of the bench bros, so it's time to drop the haughty attitude, put away your monocle, and join the tan kids in front of the mirror. Failure to train your biceps may well lead to a torn bicep in competition, so train them a couple of times a week to ensure your tendons and ligaments are up to the task of a heavy pull. I prefer cables for biceps, and generally do 5-25 rep sets of rope hammer curls two or three times a week, supersetted with rope pushdowns for triceps.
- **Hamstrings**. Strong hamstrings are essential to a good deadlift. Vince Urbank, who holds the American deadlfting record with a 906 raw pull at 308 lbs., reputedly does ultra-high rep sets of hamstring curls in the form of 50 to 100 rep sets, in order to flush them with blood and strengthen the insertions. I don't quite go that far, but I do recommend doing multiple sets of 10-20 reps at the end of

your workout at least twice a week. Glute-ham raises are also a great hamstring accessory movement, and can easily be done by throwing a yoga mat on the floor in front of any heavy machine and wedging your toes under a low crossbar on it. You don't need a GHR bench to do GHRs. I do these for lower reps and add weight with a weighted vest on occasion.

- **Calves**. Andy Bolton is a big proponent of calf raises to assist in your pull, and as he is the world record holder in the equipped deadlift at 308 lbs., he knows what he's doing (Bolton). Like the hamstring curls, include these a couple of times a week to finish out your workout.

BASIC TIPS ON THE DEADLIFT ITSELF

- **Get as close to the bar as humanly possible**. This seems ultra-basic, but it is probably the most important part of the lift. If the bar gets away from you, you cannot possibly finish the lift. You should start with the bar against or within one inch of your shins, and the bar should be dragged up your shins as you pull. Additionally, you want your hips as close to the bar as possible, which brings us to point #2.
- **Do not sit into the lift too much**. This is incredibly important. When you sit too deep into the deadlift, whether it's conventional or sumo, you'll create "slack" in the lift, so when you start your initial pull you're going to generate force against nothing and hit a wall. The deadlift is enough of a bitch without adding additional difficulty. Olympic lifters generally have a real problem with this, and they in particular need to remember that you should start with your hips high. According to Dave Tate, champion deadlifter Chuck Vogelpohl used to pull in khakis for this very reason- it prevents you from dropping your ass too low to the ground because you'll split your pants if you do (Eggers). I generally train in cargo shorts, which accomplished the very same thing, and I can attest to the fact that the sear of your pants/shorts will explode like a shaken can of soda spiked on the ground if you drop your hips when you pull.

- **Round-back lifting is not necessarily a bad thing**. For whatever reason, there appears to be some sort of a witch-hunt regarding round-backed lifting, probably fueled by insurance companies. People who should never lift with a round back are weak and untrained people. If you look at odd-shaped object lifts performed in real life by truly strong people, such as log or stone lifts, you'll see that the lifts are always done with a round back. Similarly, many of the best pullers in history, such as Konstantin Konstantinovs, John Kuc, Andy Bolton, and Bob Peoples pulled with pronounced rounding in their backs. I personally pull with a round back and have never had a single problem with my lower back. That is not to say you should intentionally pull with a round back, but if your back rounds on a heavy pull, it's not the end of the world, and fuck anyone who says it is. Ten times out of ten, the guys bitching about round back lifting are weak as kittens.
- **Do not try to squat a deadlift**. That might sound silly, but I've read countless articles and message board posts wherein the deadlift is described as a reverse squat. It's not- it's pretty obviously a pull, and should be approached as such. The mentalities for each movement are as different as the movements, as well. The deadlift is the ultimate instance of an unstoppable force vs. an immovable object. You must approach the bar like a caged beast and literally tear it off the ground. Provided your form doesn't deviate, there is literally no amount of pumpitude that is too much for the deadlift- you should be practically rabid when you approach the bar. That mentality doesn't work for the squat, as approaching the squat too wildly will get your mind out of the game and you'll usually reverse the movement before you hit parallel as a result. Thus, you cannot squat a deadlift or deadlift a squat.
- **Pull back, not up**. When you're deadlifting, you're basically trying to pull your hips through the bar path, rather than pull the bar straight up. Thus, your

shoulders and knees should always be behind the bar- remember, this is not the first pull in a clean.

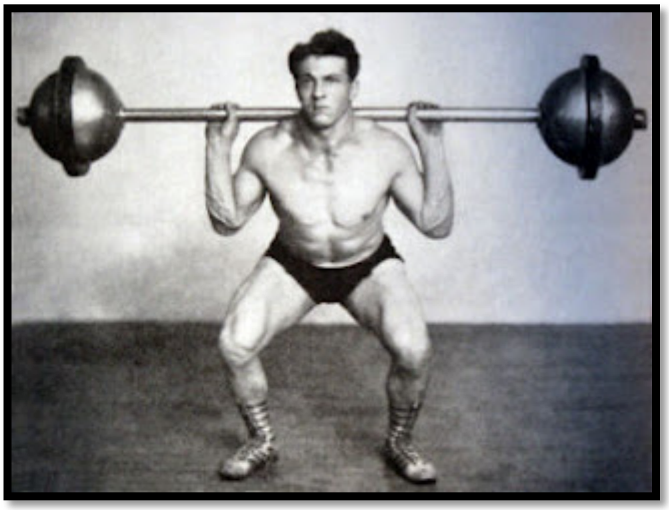
- **Check your toes**. When pulling conventional, your toes should point straight ahead. When pulling sumo, you should have your hips, knees, and toes all pointing in exactly the same direction.
- **Get in shape**. That might seem silly, but the best deadlifters in history have generally been people with incredibly physical jobs (most of the best Finn deadlifters were loggers, Bob Peoples was a farmer, etc.). Thus, you are going to need to increase your overall physical workload to condition yourself for deadlifting. My personal favorite movement for GPP is the stone load. When I had access to stones, I really enjoyed loading the 135 lb stone onto a high box for time, usually about 20 minutes. I would generally do this with a partner and we would alternate reps, and it was a ball-breaker. For those of you with access to a sled, you might want to drag the sled. Louie Simmons mentioned that this movement really helped improve his lifters' pulls, and they incorporated it to mimic what the Finns used to do as a major part of their workday- drag logs (Simmons). Whatever you decide to do, get your ass in shape if you want a brutal deadlift.
- **Don't quit**. The deadlift is perhaps the best example of a lift wherein he who wants it the most wins. A heavy deadlift is never fun— it's a brutal, gut-wrenching grind of a lift where you're worried you're going to shit yourself and pass out. It's not for the weak minded or the faint-hearted. It is perhaps the truest test of will to win in which one could compete. Thus, show the world you're a badass and pull until you're physically incapable of continuing the lift.

A NOTE ON THE ATTACHED PROGRAMS

In an effort to be as unpredictable and ultimately chaotic as possible, I've included a deadlifting specialization routine. It's basically the sum total of all of my efforts in the lift, and will at the very least take your deadlift from shitty to passable, and will probably take it to "holy shit" if you stick with it. That stated, I'm not anywhere near Coan's 791 deadlift (no one on Earth has come near it,) but I've only been out-pulled once in the last couple of years, and am ranked #5 on the all-time list for raw deadlifters at 181. Thus, I have a pretty good feeling I know what I'm talking about. There will be a squat specialization routine as well, and you can feel free to alternate between them, should you so wish. Frankly, I'm including these programs due to popular demand. They should be a starting point, rather than an end, and a place from which you can build a routine that suits your personality, body type, and the amount of time you can devote to training.

SQUATTING LIKE YOU'RE THE CEO OF THE PAPER STREET SOAP COMPANY

If there's one exercise on which I feel confident I can be a revolution-inspiring, Baby Gap t-shirt clad and bloodspattered Tyler Durden to the assembled masses, it is unequivocally the squat. At the moment, I'm 17 lbs off a world record that has stood since 1973, and my latest third attempt was easy as pie. As such, I feel pretty confident acting as a vocal authority on the king of exercises. Making my level of comfort even greater is the fact that I wasn't always a great squatter, and for years was a barely passable squatter. That did not, however, deter me from breaking my ass on it. Thus, you motherfuckers need to sit back, grab a fucking notepad, and forget every single thing you think you know about squatting. It's highly likely all you have in your mental Rolodex for squatting is a pile of horseshit written by people who suck at squatting for people who've accepted they're always going to suck at squatting. No woman worth her salt would seek advice on prepping for a hundred man gangbang from a Catholic nun, and no man is going to seek advice on changing his oil from an effete, coiffed Frenchman on a moped. You should be no different about the squat.



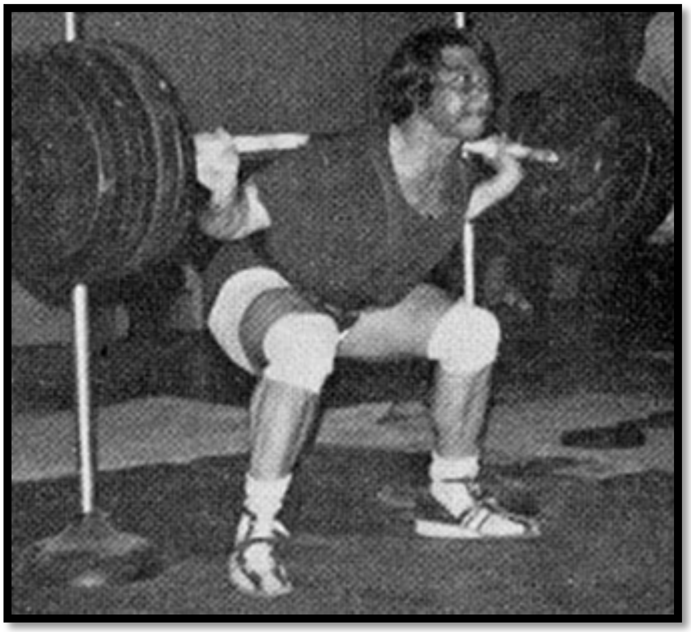
Like the bench press, the squat is a relatively young exercise as well, as the squat rack wasn't invented until the 20th Century. Prior to its invention, the only time the squat was done was if it was clean and pressed to the back or held in the clean rack and front squatted. Milo Steinborn, a German strongman who arrived in the United States in 1921, popularized the back squat by demonstrating the version popularly contested in Germany at the time. At that time, since they had no rack, the Germans would upend the barbell, lay it across their backs, and then squat (Boff). Though Steinborn is the person credited with its invention, he neither invented it nor was best at it— Germans competed in it for years before Steinborn brought it to the US, and Carl Moerke was the first person to break the 600 lb barrier in the back squat defeat the legendary strongman Hermann Goerner in competition (Todd). The squat rack seems to have been invented in the 1930s, though that's a guess based on the fact that it was popularized in books at that time. The lift was still considered one of the non-Olympic "odd lifts" contested in AAU meets and the like, but it didn't really gain full preeminence as the king of all exercises until powerlifting became an official sport in the 1970s. Since then, the squat basically been the Robert Downey Jr. of weightlifting, passing in and out of periodically with strength coaches as sports scientists have struggled to keep up with advances in sport training. Like Robert Downey Jr., the squat is currently enjoying a hell of a lot of popularity, and is currently regarded as one of the best, if not the best, exercise for gaining muscular weight and strength. In spite of that fact, there's still no real consensus about how it should be performed, the ideal squat stance for certain lifters, or the best method of performance for it. If you haven't already picked up on this underlying theme, you're a little slow, but I'll catch you up—there's no consensus because there is no one best method for performing the squat.

"You do the little job you're trained to do. 'Pull a lever.' 'Push a button.' You don't understand any of it, and then you just die." – Tyler Durden

From the emails and comments I've received on my squat form, there appears to be a pervasive and hilariously nonsensical opinion that one's squat stance must be moderate when squatting raw. At best, the reasoning online appears to be "a wide stance will kill your hips eventually," and at worst, people posit some preposterous bullshit about power transfer in the hips versus the legs in a pathetic attempt to bolster their nonsense with officious wording. Having squatted with a moderately to extremely wide stance for years, I can say that you're in no danger of "killing your hips," whatever the fuck that means, any more than you are of incurring any other injury squatting, and that this point is especially moot considering the downright embarrassing numbers most people put up on the squat. I will state, for the record, that the wider my stance goes, the higher my squat goes.

Let's take a look at what works, shall we?

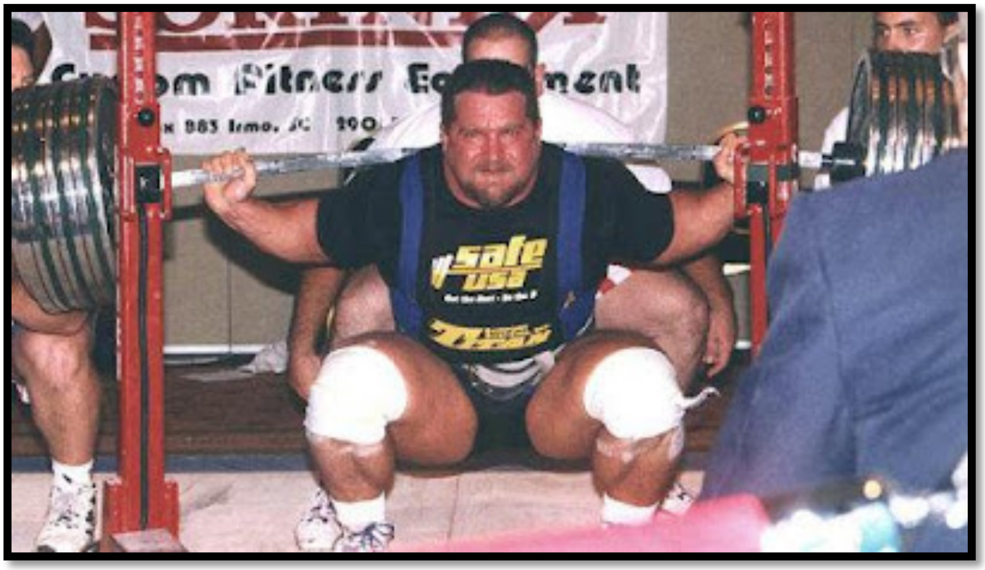
THE SQUAT FORM OF THE GREATS



Tony Fratto- World record holder since 1974 at 198 with 688 squat. Moderately wide stance, toes out, wide grip.

Jill Mills- World Record holder at 181 with 473 lbs. Moderate stance, wide grip.

Stan Efferding- World record holder with 854 at 275. EXTREMELY wide stance and grip.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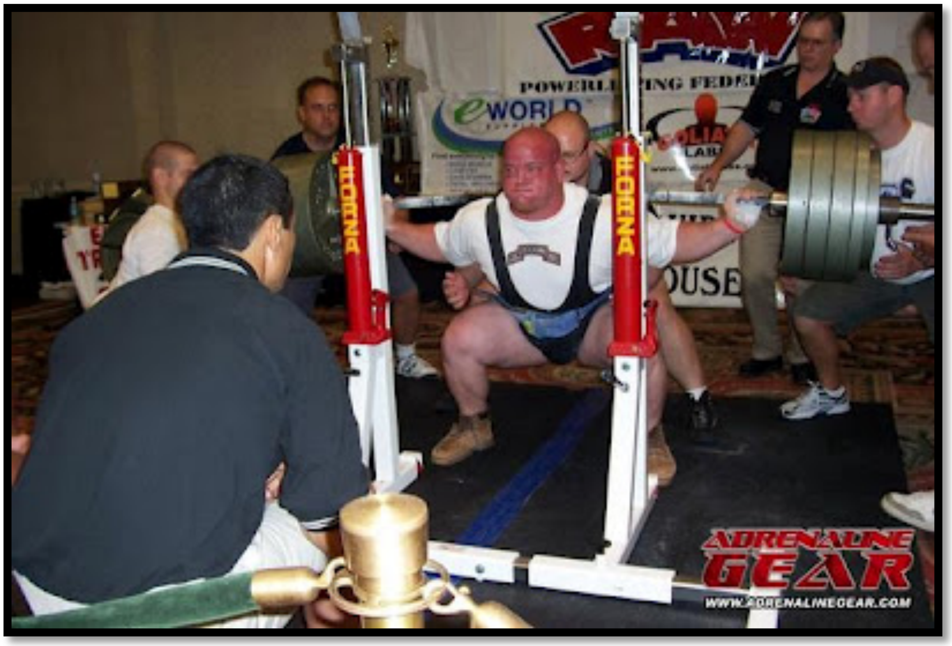
Kirk Karwoski- World record holder at 242 with an 826 squat. Moderate stance, toes out, wide grip.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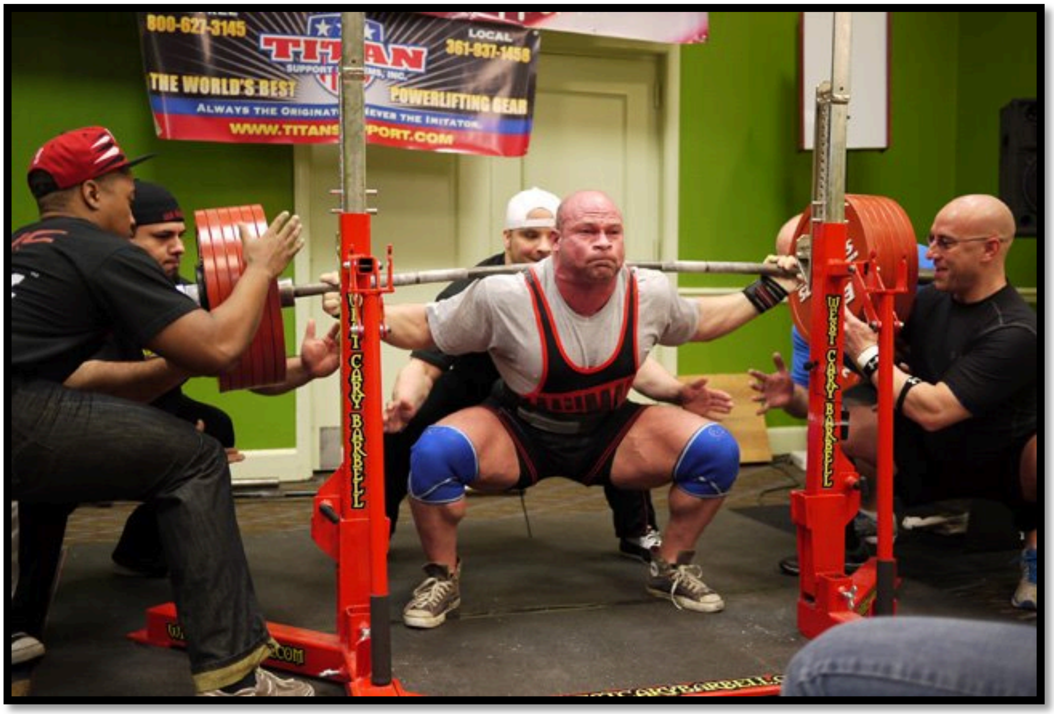
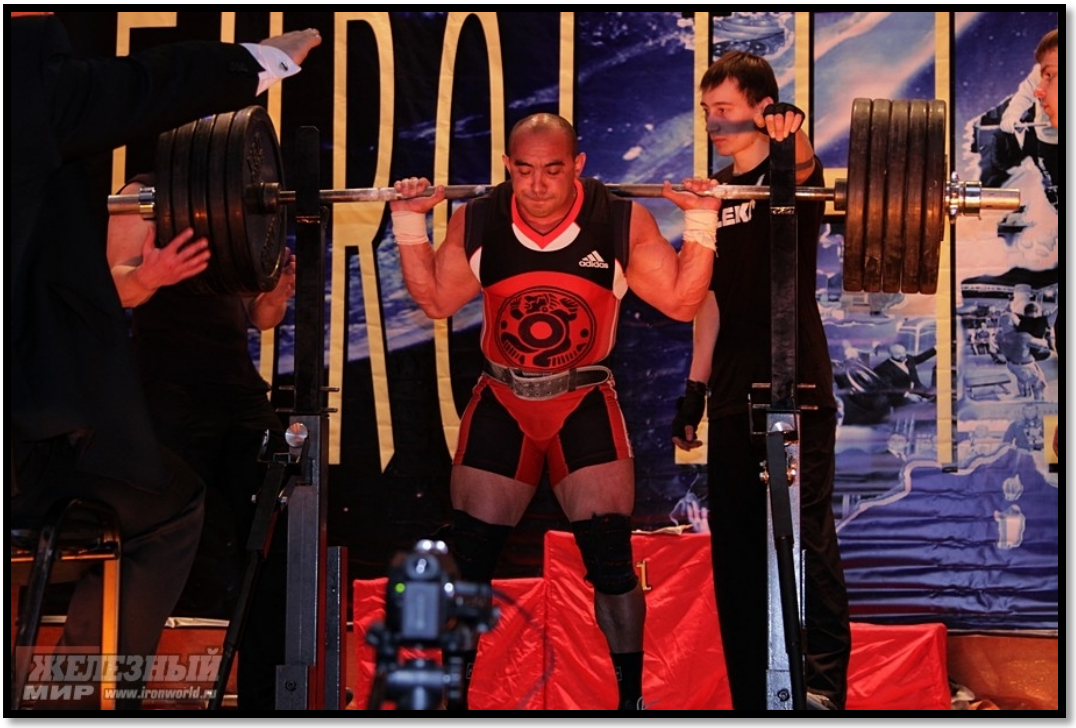
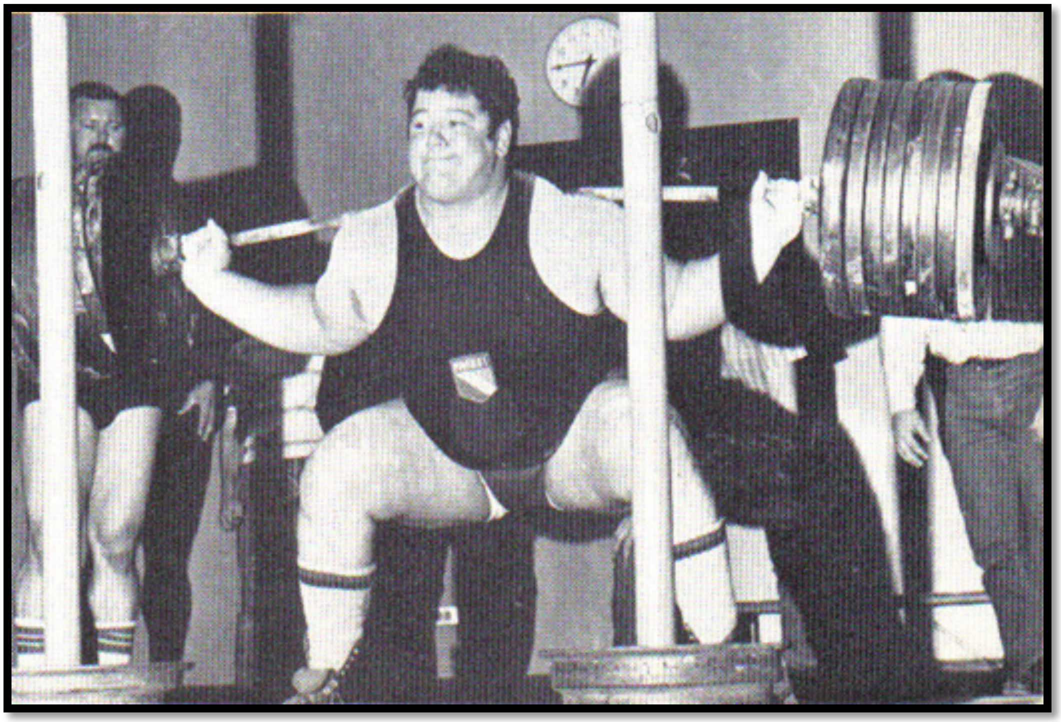
Scot Weech- World record holder at 308 with an 826 squat. Wide stance, toes forward, extremely wide grip.



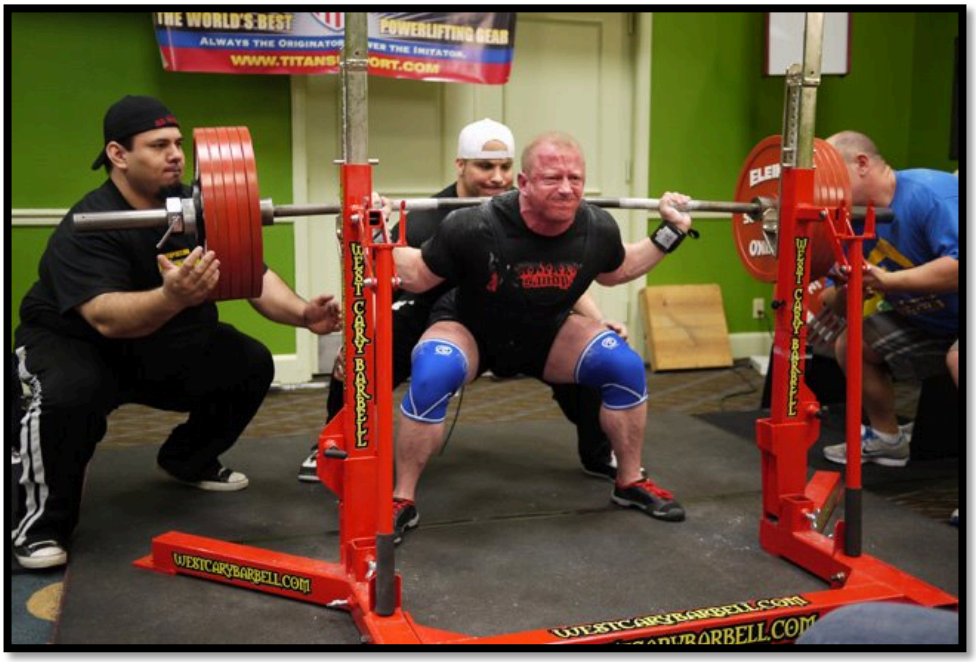
Sam Byrd- World record holder with 782 lbs at 220. Wide stance, toes out, extremely wide grip.



Dan Dumitrache- World record holder at 165, 672 lbs with wraps. Crazy narrow stance and grip. (Pictured at 181.)



Don Reinhoudt- World record holder with a 934lb squat at SHW. Wide stance, toes pretty much forward, extremely wide grip.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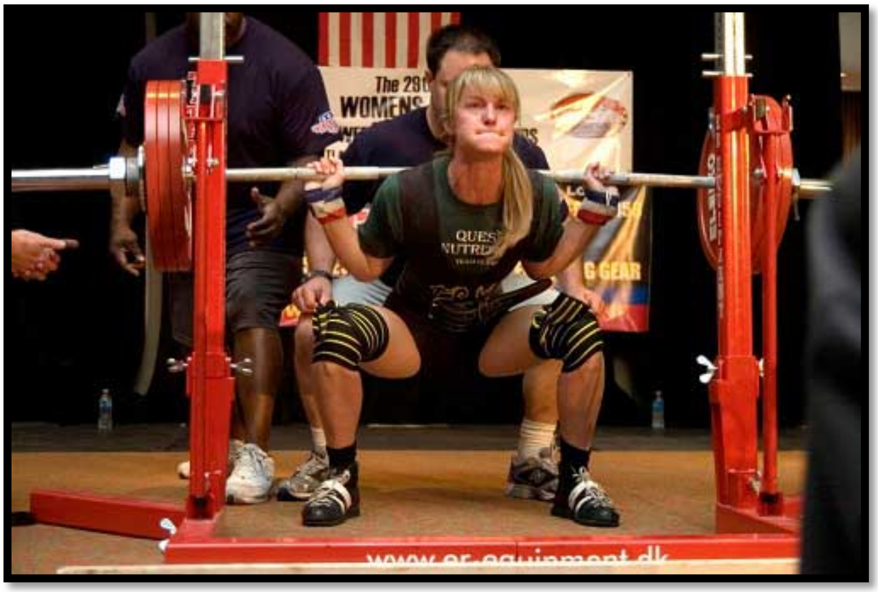
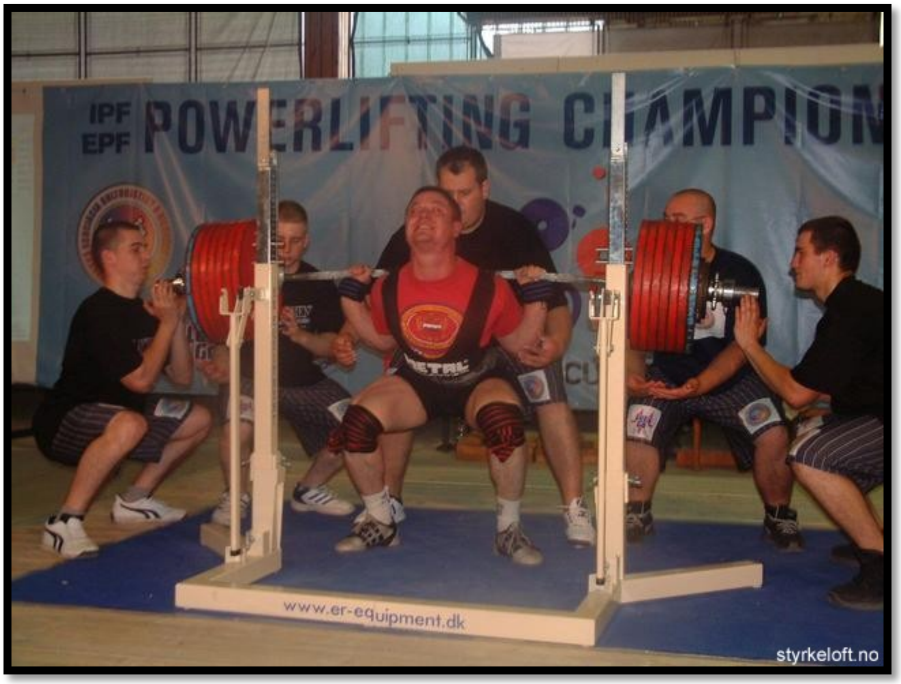
Me- 17 lbs off a 40 year old world record with a 633 squat. I squat wide as shit, and have started pointing my toes more forward than this picture shows, and have spread my grip wider over time. My squat form is constantly evolving, and I am currently using a suicide grip with my pinkies on the outside edge of the knurling.



Jennifer Thompson- 314 at 132. Wide stance, toes pointed slightly out, super close grip.



Konstantin Pozdeev- World record holder at 220 with a wrapped 815. Horrifyingly narrow Olympic stance and grip. His squat is as awesome as it is unbelievably awkward looking.

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Suzie Hartwig-Gary- World record holder at 114 with a 319 squat. Moderate stance, close grip. By the way, time to stop patting yourselves on the back for your 315 squat and get pissed that a 114lb chick makes you her punk bitch every day.

What did we learn from this? Conventional wisdom about the squat is worse than worthless, for one. For another, the best of the best seem to squat primarily with a wide stance, even when raw. If anything, the close and moderate stance lifters appear to be the outliers, rather than the norm.

"I really wanted to put a bullet between the eyes of every endangered panda that wouldn't screw to save its species and every whale or dolphin that gave up and ran itself aground."
- Tyler Durden

As always, what is needed here is not the blind faith in idiocy that most people seem to have, but rather an overwhelming contempt for the opinions of the majority and a burning desire to determine what works best for you. No one will be able to tell you what your best form is without 1) the requisite experience in powerlifting that comes from a great deal of training and a great deal of successful competition, and 2) seeing you attempt squat repetitions with a wide variety of squat forms. This should be the most basic, simple to understand element in this equation, but for some reason people seem to think that blindly asking people so stupid and ill-informed that chimpanzees seem sage-like by comparison is the best course of action for them.

Before you consult a single other person for advice on the squat, spend a week squatting every other day. These don't need to be marathon, balls-out sessions. The goal is, in fact, to see what feels most comfortable squatting. After months of squatting close to Olympic-style, I opened up my stance as much as my flexibility would allow and dropped the bar as low on my back as I could, and I watched my squat jump up like I never thought possible. What I discovered was that the strength was there— I simply was using the wrong form to maximize my leverages. As such, your goal for the next couple of weeks should be to determine, through trial and error, what your best form is. If possible, find an elite lifter whose body type most resembles your own and see what form they're using. Try that first and foremost. You might think that the new form would take some time to acclimatize yourself to, but that's not the case— I realized the benefit of my new form within a couple of sets. Once you break through the mental wall of "this feels wrong," you'll determine what works the best for you. Four variables with which to play:

- **Foot placement**. Test different widths ranging from shoulder width, slightly outside shoulder width, and as wide as you can get your feet inside the rack.
- **Foot angle**. Conventional wisdom dictates that your foot should be in line with your knee, but I've found that angling my feet more forward seems to reduce the amount of tendinitis pain I get in my knees.
- **Bar placement**. I've found that the lower the bar, the easier the movement, which would be exactly what one would expect with any knowledge of physics- Archimedes postulated this thousands of years ago, and it's correct. The closer the bar is to the fulcrum, the less your effort force needs to be. Thus, if you squat with a high bar, you're making the lift harder than it needs to be. That stated, some lifters are much more comfortable squatting with a high bar, Olympic style, and they put up huge numbers as a result. The form you should use is not the one you *think* should be best- it should be the form with which you're strongest and most comfortable.
- **Hand placement**. This will be a combination of what your shoulder flexibility allows and what's comfortable. Conventional wisdom dictates that your hands should be as close to your shoulders as is comfortable, but I cannot find any reasoning for *why* this is the case.

SQUATTING LIKE A PRO

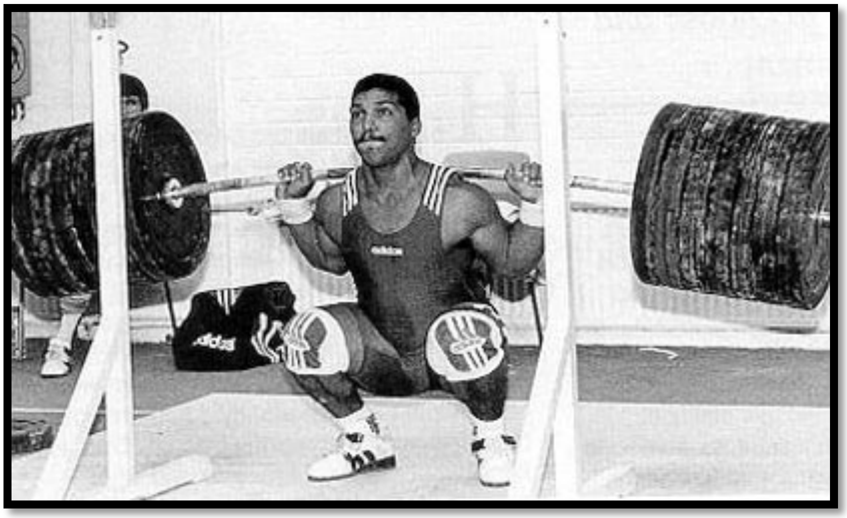
For any of you who have ever run a Google search for information about squatting, you know that there are at least as many shiftless hobo squatters as there are people who go into the gym, put weight on their backs, and squat to parallel. Interestingly, there's a correlation to be drawn between the two groups of squatters. Living in an abandoned building has its drawbacks, certainly, but it also affords one a great deal of freedom. Without rent, utilities, or insurance to pay, one enjoys massive financial freedom, though they have a far greater responsibility in terms of general upkeep of the structure in which they live— though you might be able to live there without paying, you live with the stress of operating without a safety net, and with the knowledge that the slightest slip in concentration insofar as your abode goes and you're fucked, pretty much without recourse or salvation. They can, however, move into another shithole if the building collapses around their ears.

An elite squatter is not unlike the misanthropic, squatting brawlers in Fight Club, except for the fact that if the structure in which they're living collapses, they're wholly and irreparably fucked. If the shithole in which squatters lives caves in around their ears, all they have to do is grab their little hobo knapsack and their heroin and move to another rat-infested hellhole. Raw squatters don't have that luxury- they can't move out of their body if it collapses. Raw squatting is like walking a tightrope without a safety net— there is nothing to save you if in the event your body betrays you. Raw squatting is thus fairly terrifying, if you're using the right amount of weight. Without briefs, a suit, or any of the other wacky accouterments of geared squatting (I've even seen people squat wearing bench shirts), it's scary enough, and it gets even scarier when you have to walk your happy ass out of the rack as well. If you squat without knee wraps, you don't even have the sense of safety that comes from knowing your knee wraps will catch you in the hole- either you're moving the weight through force of will or it will drive you bodily into the ground and leave you broken and bleeding. As a result, raw squatters, especially good raw squatters, have to be like a combination of two epic Batman villains— the Scarecrow and Bane. They have to be expert managers of fear, and they have to be willing and able to destroy every motherfucking thing in their paths to achieve their goals.

"I wanted to breathe smoke. I wanted to burn the Louvre. I'd do the Elgin Marbles with a sledgehammer and wipe my ass with the Mona Lisa. This is my world, now. This is my world, my world, and those ancient people are dead."- Tyler Durden

Interestingly, you'd think that the best squatters would, like the best deadlifters and benchers, have somewhat similar structures to their workouts. They, however, do not— the programs of squatting's elite absolutely run the gamut from completely insane volume to minimalism so basic and scanty it'd make Frank Stella's simplest artwork seem hideously complex. Thus, the typical admonition to avoid rote adherence to a given program is magnified when devising a squatting routine— experimentation is even more critical, as there is really no "right" way to pursue a world record... just a hell of a lot of wrong ones and some that will work for you once you determine your ideal workload. Thus, without further adieu, I give you the greatest squatters in history, but you can rest assured it won't be pretty.

THE SQUAT PROGRAMS OF THE GREATS



IDALBERTO ARANDA

If any of you are aware of this guy's existence, I'd be seriously stunned. He's not a powerlifter, and never held a world record in the squat. That, however, makes him no less our physical superior or us his bitches on that exercise. Aranda is a little guy— 5'3", 170 lbs, and an Olympic weightlifter for the tiny, poverty-stricken island nation that has given the world nothing but lung cancer and stupid ball caps for hipsters— Cuba. In spite of the fact that he grew up in a nation-wide ghetto off the coast of Florida, Aranda racked up some impressive finishes in world competition, and set a middleweight record in the clean and jerk in 1999 (SR). What's truly impressive, however, is the fact that Aranda could double 638, beltless and wrapless, with dive-bombed Olympic high bar squats.

Feel unmanned? I certainly do. The secret behind this guy's squatting success is the Soviet Olympic weightlifting system, which has fallen out of favor in recent years in spite of the fact that it served as the basis for basically every successful Oly program since the 1950s. In the Soviet system, youth lifters start with a three day a week program and then work their way up to six days a week of training (Performance One). According to a Cuban coach who studied weightlifting in Russia, "the Russians and Bulgarians were relatively equal in terms of training volume, but that the Bulgarians had more lifts in the 95-100 percent zones, while the Russians would have more lifts in the 75-80 percent intensity zone" (Poliquin).

The Soviets divided their movements into four groups, and then divided the days amongst them, mixing the first four groups, which were lower body dominant, with the last group, which is upper body dominant. These five groups were Snatches, Cleans, Snatch Pulls, Squats, and Jerks and Presses. Utilizing the Soviet method, Arranda squatted roughly 3 days a week, might have done so up to three times a day depending on the section of the periodization scheme he was in, and never did more than 6 reps (Poltaev). Thus, Arranda's insane squat came from extremely frequent squatting with moderate poundages.

His scheme would have looked like this:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snatches	X				X	
Cleans			X			X
Snatch Pulls					X	
Squats	X		X		X	
Jerks and Presses		X		X		X

(Source: Poltaev)

"Mad" Mike Kuhns

One thing I discovered while researching this post was that not one, but two midgets hold world records in the squat— Andrzej Stanaszek and Mike Kuhns. Frankly, I think that's pretty fucking impressive, given the fact that they both appear to have achondroplasia, which I would guess would make it insanely hard to handle big weights since their cartilage is abnormally formed. Additionally, people with dwarfism are typically bow-legged, which would make me thing they're generally structurally unsound for heavy squatting. I'm not, however, an orthopedist, so I could be entirely wrong. In any event, one of these bad little motherfuckers, Mike Kuhns, is a world record holder at 148 with a 556 lb wrapless squat. Thus, those amongst you without dwarfism might want to consider a different weight class if you want to smash a world record, since I'd venture to guess you'll have a hard time matching Kuhns. Additionally, I'd bet Kuhns gets more ass than any of us, since he's rocking a surfer look and is strong as shit.

In any event, "Mad" Mike has a unique take on squat training, which I'd assume has to do with his dwarfism, but might suit those of you with back issues in particular— he uses belt squats to supplement his back squats. He trains six days a week, using Saturday and Monday as his squat days, split in the middle by a deadlift day on Wednesday (Stewart):

Monday

Belt Squats- work up to 2 x 30; 1 x 10 paused reps in the hole (similar to a standing leg press from IronMind)

Pullovers- 1 x 20

One-Legged Curls- 3x20

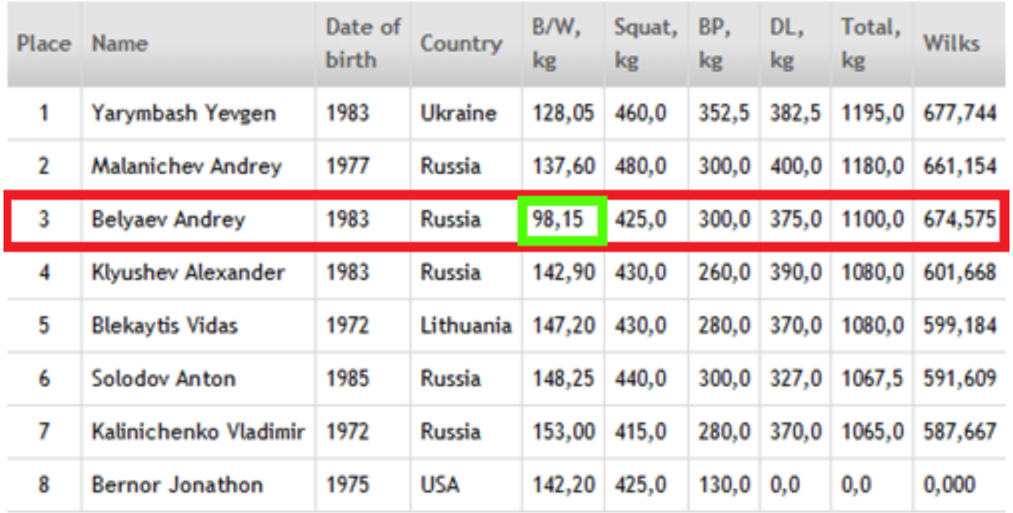
Wednesday
Deadlift- work up to 1 x 5 with 5RM; 1 x 3 with 3RM; 1 x 2 with 2RM

Saturday
Squats- work up to 2 top sets, never completing more than 4 reps per set

Thus, if you've got a medical issue that "prevents" you from squatting that isn't parapalegia, suck it the fuck up. You might think that Kuhns can hit huge weights because he doesn't have far to move them, but you're failing to take into account that even if he's got proportionate dwarfism, he's still all fucked up. "With proportionate dwarfism, problems in growth and development often result in complications with poorly developed organs. For example, heart problems often present in Turner syndrome can have a significant effect on a child's general health. An absence of sexual maturation associated with growth hormone deficiency or Turner syndrome affects not only physical development but also social functioning" (CNN). Thus, you've got no fucking excuse other than the fact that your mom is more of a man than you are if you're not crushing shit on the squat.

ANDREY BELYAEV

Andrey Belyaev, "lunatic Belorussian squatting death machine", as I like to call him made huge waves a couple of years ago and then dropped directly off the fucking map in raw squatting, preferring to save his efforts for single-ply cash meets. Prior to his abandonment of our collective cause, however, Belyaev busted a 704 raw squat at 220. While that's not currently near the Byrd's 782 lb. record, it was a top squat when he did it in 2007, and would still put him in the upper echelon of raw squatters. Belyaev's best lifts have been done in single ply, however, where he is always nearly a David to Andrey Melanchaev's Goliath. The Russians, being the crazy Cossack motherfuckers they are, put on an open-weight single ply squat meet every year with a huge purse called the Super-Cup of Titans. In the last two years, Belyaev's placed 3rd and 4th overall, field in spite of the fact that he was outweighed by about 100 pounds by all of the competitors, giving him 2nd and 1st by Wilks, he goliaths won and the other took second, but Belyaev beat out the rest of the. In case you're curious, here's how he stacked up against the competition in 2011:



Place	Name	Date of birth	Country	B/W, kg	Squat, kg	BP, kg	DL, kg	Total, kg	Wilks
1	Yarymbash Yevgen	1983	Ukraine	128,05	460,0	352,5	382,5	1195,0	677,744
2	Malanichev Andrey	1977	Russia	137,60	480,0	300,0	400,0	1180,0	661,154
3	Belyaev Andrey	1983	Russia	98,15	425,0	300,0	375,0	1100,0	674,575
4	Klyushev Alexander	1983	Russia	142,90	430,0	260,0	390,0	1080,0	601,668
5	Blekaytis Vidas	1972	Lithuania	147,20	430,0	280,0	370,0	1080,0	599,184
6	Solodov Anton	1985	Russia	148,25	440,0	300,0	327,0	1067,5	591,609
7	Kalinichenko Vladimir	1972	Russia	153,00	415,0	280,0	370,0	1065,0	587,667
8	Bernor Jonathon	1975	USA	142,20	425,0	130,0	0,0	0,0	0,000

That 935 single-ply squat puts him 100 lbs ahead of the all time (since PLWatch started keeping records in 2007) American best, which is beyond phenomenal, and holds the raw record in the total with a ridiculous 2,028. This is unsurprising, however, since Belyaev trains about 100 times harder than anyone else on Earth, utilizing a program that was allegedly written by Boris Shieko himself. Those of you with weak stomachs or a profound fear of overtraining might want to take some anti-anxiety meds and skip this section, because shit is officially about to get crazy. Given that Belaev's training is incredibly volume intensive and even a week of his program is longer than John Holmes' cock, I'm only including his lower body work. A translated copy of the last 4 week cycle of his program is in the appendix, along with his untranslated (and unformatted) workout documents. The workout in total is fantastically long and detailed, and about as Russian a program as you're likely to see— extremely frequent and long workouts with moderate intensity.

Day 1 Morning

Squats- 3 x 1 with 60%1RM; 3 x 1 with 70%1RM; 2 x 4 with 75%1RM

Day 1 Evening

Squats- 5 x 1 with 50%; 5 x 1 with 60%; 4 x 1 with 70%; 3 x 2 with 80%; 2 x 4 with 85%

Day 2

Deficit Deadlifts- 3 x 1 with 50%1RM; 3 x 1 with 60%1RM; 2 x 4 with 70%1RM

Day 3 Morning

Deadlift (between 2 stops – just below the knee to just above the knee)- 3 x 1 with 50%1RM; 3 x 1 with 60%1RM; 3 x 1 with 70%1RM; 2 x 4 with 75%1RM

Day 3 Evening

Deadlift (with chains)- 3 x 1 with 50%1RM; 3 x 1 with 60%1RM; 3 x 1 with 70%1RM; 3 x 4 with 75%1RM

Day 5 Morning

Squats- 5 x 1 with 50%1RM; 5 x 1 with 60%1RM; 3 x 1 with 70%1RM; 2 x 5 with 75%1RM

Day 5 Evening

Squats- 5 x 1 with 50%1RM; 5 x 1 with 60%1RM; 1 x 4, 6, 8, 7, 5 with 70%1RM

Day 6 Evening

1.**Deadlift** (from the just below knee)- 3 x 1 with 60%; 3 x 1 with 70%; 3 x 3 with 80%; 3 x 2 with 90%

SAM BYRD

If you didn't already want to throw yourself down a well for not wrecking shop at squatting, let me give you one more reason— Sam Byrd's existence. For those of you who've just opened your eyes for the first time and are reading this while suckling on a teat, allow me to fill you in on Byrd— he's a national-level bodybuilding competitor who happens to be the world record holder in the squat with a 782 lb wrapless 2nd attempt. In that meet, he actually broke the world record with his opener, which has to be a first.

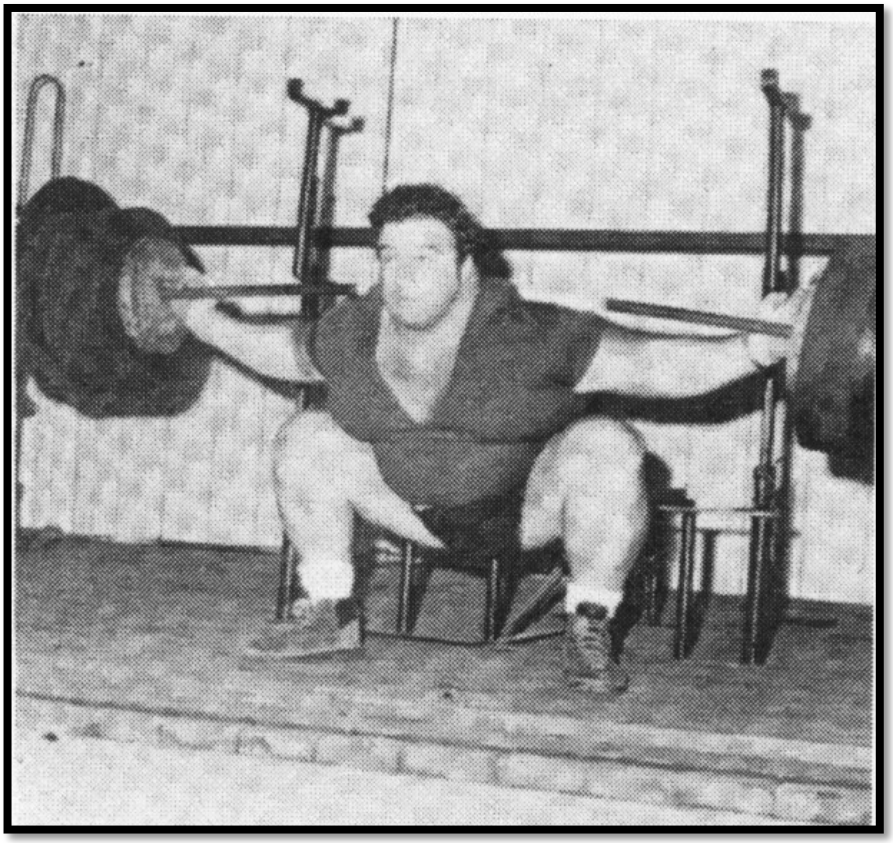
Byrd built his beastly squat with twice a week squat training which is paired with the deadlift in both workouts. Byrd cycles his training in microcycles, during which time he rotates upward from 60% of a 1RM he can hit "any day of the week regardless of how long [he's] been without training," to a point where he can hit 5 sets of 5 with 70% or 5x 3 with 80% of his previous 1RM in 15 minutes (Byrd). That's right— Byrd uses a Frankenstein's monster version of 5 x 5 combined with Staley's Escalating Density training. He also mixes in bands and chains to add resistance at the bottom of his lift, which he thinks is critical for raw lifters.

Interestingly, Byrd prefers to use "rep maxes rather than heavy singles because it’s less taxing" and "less intimidating. Confidence is key in this sport, as with pretty much anything else in life." He's a great deal more confident with a "5 rep max for a new PR than a 1 rep for a new PR" and finds that rep max calculators are spot on for him, so he uses http://www.joeskopec.com/repmax.html to calculate his rep maxes. Thus, he uses his 3 or 5 rep max to determine his 1RM and then resets to 60% based on the new max. At that point, he does the following:

> "If I start a new wave, which I am likely to do because, as I said, I avoid they heavy stuff as long as possible, then I take the next 3 weeks and wave 60% for 5x5 the first week, 70% 3x5 (plus a set at 60%x5 on the way up) on the second week, and then 80% for 5x3reps (with 60% and 70% both done for 5 on the way up. Remember all these sets are done with CAT— 100% effort on every single rep- all should be fast and explosive, no grinders. If you are grinding at all or slowing down then you tried to progress too fast. I do add a belt for 80%, but nothing less than that.
>
> The fourth week I'll rest, then take then finally take the rep max or repeat one more time before the rep max. I prefer this way because I like to do my rep max with about 80% and I like to feel it on my back a time or two before I have to max out my reps with it. Again, it's a confidence thing. After all those weeks crushing weights confidence is pretty high. I've performed hundreds of explosive powerful reps and not one single miss or grinder anywhere. By the time I get ready to max I'm ready to test the limits. Once I test, I reset my max and either begin again or change things up to add some variety- maybe a few weeks of chained singles the last 4 weeks before a meet" (Byrd).

Byrd's two squat days a week are:
Main Squat Day:
Squat- Sets of five according to the aforementioned progression
Deadlift (usually a stiff-legged deadlift or similar set/rep for speed pulls)- 3 x 10 or 6 x 5 for SLDLS or 6-8 x 3 with 60% 1RM on speed pulls with 1 minute rest between sets.
Glute-Ham Raise- 3-4 x 10-15
Abs
Upper Back

Front Squat and Rack Pull Day:
Front Squats- 3x5 with a weight on which he fails on his 15th rep. He goes to total failure on the last set, and increases the weight when he can get 8.
Rack pulls (just below the knee)- Sets of 5 until he can no longer get 5, then a heavy set of 3.



PAUL ANDERSON

Paul Anderson should be a man who needs no introductions. He was a standout in powerlifting when the sport was still in its infancy, and was a mad scientist of training whose hideous but effective creations produced some unbelievable, Frankenstein's monster-esque numbers. In addition to putting up some insane squat numbers (Anderson is reputed to have doubled 900 raw at a bodyweight of 330), Anderson was a standout Olympic weightlifter and held the record in the strict press for some time.

Like many of the other elite lifters I've outlined, Anderson trained a lot. He trained 6 days a week and was a big fan of day-long workouts, wherein he would rest up to 30 minutes in between sets. During his half hour breaks, Anderson would sit and bullshit with whomever was around while drinking milk, of which he'd generally consume a gallon in the course of a workout. Though he enjoyed the daylong lifting extravaganzas, Anderson's typical workouts clocked in at a completely reasonable three to four hours. Frankly, I'm not sure if his style was prescient of the Bulgarians' modern lifting protocol, or if great minds happen to arrive at the same Lewis Carrollesque destinations, but either way they seem to have come to the same conclusion—great strength comes from a ton of time expended under the weights.

Perhaps with that in mind, Anderson developed a training protocol so unique it makes echidnas and duck-billed platypuses seem positively pedestrian in comparison— the golf workout. To facilitate day-long training, Anderson set up two golf holes on his farm about 300 yards apart with a weight rack at either end. He'd whack the ball down to the one hole, which was next to an outdoor rack with a bar loaded to 400 lbs. He'd do 3-5 reps in the overhead press with it, then whack the ball back to the other hole, where he'd set up a squat rack loaded to 800. He'd bang out 3-5 reps on the squat with that weight, then repeat, all afternoon. The total volume he must have lifted had to have been astonishing, and was likely a pretty decent way to spend an afternoon.

Anderson was also the godfather of partial squats, though he utilized an unsurprisingly unique method of doing partials. Inside his squat rack, Anderson dug a hole in the ground. Over time, he would gradually refill the hole with dirt to enable him to squat with a greater range of motion, and eventually hit 1120 for a high single. (Willoughby 112)

Anderson’s typical workout week for squatting looked like this:

T/TH/S
Full Squat
2x10x600
1x2x825
1x2x845
1x2x900

Half Squat
1x2x1200

Quarter Squat
1x2x1800

PHIL "SQUATZILLA" HARRINGTON

Known affectionately by Westsiders as "Squatzilla", Phil Harrington is a shredded 198 lber who currently holds the wrapped raw world record at 198 with a 760 squat. Harrington trains with Westside and uses their protocol to crush shit in meets, with his addition of a tremendous amount of general physical preparation (GPP) and overall conditional, a predilection that has earned him a second nickname— "Mr. GPP". According to Louie Simmons,

> "Phil Harrington has broken several world records in the squat. His best is 905 pounds in the 181-pound class, before Mike Cartinian raised it to 930 pounds lifting for Big Iron. Phil set a goal to break Tony Fratto's raw record at 198 set in 1972, 749 pounds, and in March 2011 Phil did 755 pounds. He was concentrating on jumping exercises of all types and not doing a lot of squatting. Here is a list of jumping exercises Phil used to break the raw squat record. First, to prepare himself for jumping, he started by doing presses with a barbell and dumbbells while sitting on the floor. They are used to condition all muscles involved in jumping. First while on his knees, he did several repetitions of jumping to his feet. Next, Phil added a barbell on his back while jumping to his feet. Then, he did the following over several weeks. First, he held a bar on his thighs while kneeling and jumped to a power clean. Next, from a kneeling position with the bar on his thighs, he jumped into a power snatch. After mastering the mentioned movements, he held a bar on his thighs and jumped into a split clean and then split snatch. After this, he set records in the kneeling squat up onto a box or from a kneeling position into a long jump. These jumps build explosive power. For strength, jump onto boxes with ankle weights or a

> weight vest. Hold dumbbells and jump onto boxes for record heights with a certain amount of weight or combinations of weight. Switch the resistance often and do 10-30 jumps per workout. Two or three jump workouts a week works well. About once every month try a body weight jump record. This may look like a sports workout, but it will serve to condition a lifter as well as making his legs very explosive" (Simmons).

If that sounds positively god-awful to you, you're not alone. I can personally attest to the efficacy of weighted jumping squats, but jumping from my knees onto anything sounds like a trip to the hospital and an even more broken face than I've already got. In any event, Phil's weighted squat protocol follows Westside's template, which is as follows:

Monday- Max effort day for squat and deadlift

Max Effort Exercise– choose one exercise, work to a one-rep max, but do not perform the exercise two weeks in a row. All exercises can be enhanced with the use of bands or chains.

- **Zercher Squats**
- **Pin Lockouts** (at different heights)
- **Safety Bar Squats** (off a low box)
- **High Box Squats**
- **Deficit Deadlifts**
- **Arch-Backed Good Mornings**
- **Stiff Legged Deadlifts**
- **Belt Squats**
- **Sumo Deadlifts**

Leg Curls or Glute Ham Raises- 3-4 x 5-7

Lower Back Movement— switch this every three weeks.
- **Stiff Legged Deadlifts** (not to be done when using as a max effort exercise),
- **Pull Throughs**
- **Hyperextensions**
- **Reverse Hypers**

Upper Back Movement— 3 x 5-7
Biceps
Abs

Friday- Speed Day For Squat
Box Squats- 6-10 x 2 with 50-60% 1RM, one minute rest between sets
Leg Curls- 3 x 10
Lower Back Movement- same exercise as Mondays but lighter and more reps
Shrugs- 3 x 10-15
Biceps
Abs

"Captain" Kirk Karwoski

Karwoski dominated the squatting scene in the 1990s the way that Ron Jeremy dominated porn in the 1980s- big, mean and ugly, only way fucking leaner, bereft of 1970s throwback porn mustache, and with a hell of a lot more yelling. As such, I suppose he doesn't share all that much in common with Ron Jeremy. Nevertheless, Karwoski likely banged a bunch of broads due to his massive success in the wildly popular mainstream sport of powerlifting, and thus shares that in common with Jeremy.

Bullshitting aside, Karwoski was the real fucking deal. He squatted so far ahead of his time in the 1990s that his record of 1003 lbs in the 275lb weight class stood for over 20 years. Over his career, Karwoski pulled down 3 teenage and 3 junior world titles in addition to 7 national and 6 straight world championships (Parillo). After all of that, Karwoski reentered competition for shits and giggles in 2005, ten years after he'd left the podium previously with the world record, and got himself ranked 19th All Time amongst unequipped squatters with an 826lb squat at 240 lbs and still holds the world record with that weight in that class (Powerliftingwatch).

Karwoski, unlike most of the other great squatters in history, only did the lift once a week, but he did it with all of the intensity that Vlad the Impaler used to slaughter homeless people and Muslims in droves. Monday was squat day, and woe betide the hapless son-of-a-bitch who found himself occupying Karwoski's rack when he arrived. Were Karwoski to find someone in the rack on Monday night at 5:30, he 'd throw the guy's shit on the ground in front of the rack, look at the guy, and yell "Five minutes!" at the top of his lungs. If the guy was still there in five minutes, Karwoski would strip the weights, throw them on the floor, grab the guy's shit and throw it across the room, and scream at the dude that he "better never see that motherfucker in the gym again on a Monday night. Ever." Proving once more that assholes finish first, that story also shows how deadly serious Karwoski was about his squat workouts- no one and nothing were going to keep him from squatting on Monday nights.

> "Most power lifters share some common defects, as a whole for whatever reason, LOVE to punish, beat and torture ourselves beyond the limits of mind and body. It is our spirit that prevails. This defect of intelligence and sensibility pushes us onto the next level, makes us better and stronger. We all have lifted sick and badly hurt,, When this subject comes up with normal people and other meatheads, we all have the prideful smile when we talk about lifting with a 100 degree temperature or a torn groin. Thank God that therapy doesn't work on us." - Captain Kirk

I have two versions of Karwoski's typical training week. The first comes from a Parrillo magazine dating to 2005, and the second (pre-competition routine) comes from Marty Gallagher's *Purposeful Primitive*. They have the same structure, but different execution.

Monday (Off Season)
Squat: 135x8, 455x5, 655x3, 735x1, 825x1, 905x5 (with gear)
Leg press: work up to 1,500 for reps
Leg extensions: whole stack+
Calf raise: three sets to failure, whole stack plus 100’s
Lying leg curls: three sets with whole stack+

(Pre-Contest)
Squat- 7-10 x 2-8 (his last set would be a balls out, beltless, 80% 1RM 8 rep set.)
Leg curl- 2-3 x 5
Leg extensions- 2-3 x 5

According to Karwoski, he usually did a primary movement and four assistance exercises each workout, a couple of which were mainstays. (Critical Bench) He, like his fellow superhuman Ed Coan, felt that sets of 5 on everything were the best way to get brutally fucking strong, so they focused most of their effort within that rep range in the offseason (Gallagher), Precontest, however, Karwoski ratcheted up the intensity to ensure he’d be ready to handle the lunatic poundages for which he was famous.

Irrespective of the rep range, Captain Kirk was famous (and infamous) for his intensity, which was apparently unparalleled. Perhaps due in part to the mental toll those workouts took, Karwoski walked away from powerlifting after slapping all of this competition in the proverbial face with his dick, "sick of powerlifting" when it was apparent that he no longer had anything to prove or anyone of worth against whom to compete (Gallagher).

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MIKHAIL KOKLYAEV

Mikhail Koklyaev is a modern day Renaissance man, at least insofar as strength sports go. He's won professional powerlifting and strongman competitions, placed in the top three of just about every strongman competition in which he has participated (and they are legion), and is the six time Russian National Champion in Olympic Weightlifting. Koklyaev squatted 805 raw in competition, though it seems he's competed in powerlifting as more of a goof than anything else, since his focus is strongman. Additionally, his current training partner is the world record holder in the squat at 275, Andrey Malanichev. Malanichev's routine is not available anywhere I looked, or I would have included it, so I dug up a week in Koklyaev's training to give us an idea of what they do. Incidentally, Koklyaev's training seems to involve a considerable amount of fucking around, as there are videos of him overhead pressing two men hanging off a barbell, squatting 585 with no hands— just balancing the bar on his back, and other assorted zaniness. Koklyaev trains eight times a week, and squats four times a week, mixing in front squats, jump squats, and back squats for sets of 1-5. The rest of his workouts consist mostly of multiple sets of three reps of various permutations of the Olympic lifts.

Day 1- Evening
Front Squat- 1 x 5 x 308, 374, 462, 528 lbs.

Day 2- Off

Day 3- Evening
Squat- 1 x 3 x 154, 264, 374, 484, 594, 671 lbs.

Day 4
Jump Squat- 1 x 5 x 198, 242, 286

Day 5- Off.
Day 6- Evening
Front Squat- 1 x 5 x 198, 242, 308, 374, 418, 506; 3 x 5 x 576

Day 7- Upper Body

Day 8- Off

Day 9- Evening
Squat- 1 x 3 x 154, 242, 374, 484; 3 x 3 x 594; 1 x 10 x 594

Day 10- Evening
Jump Squat- 1 x 5 x 154, 198, 242, 282

Day 11- Upper Body

Day 12- Off

Day 13- Evening
Front Squat- 1 x 5 x 154, 262, 374, 484; 3 x 5 x 554; 1 x 5 x 598

Between the poundages and the frequency, this has got to be in the running for the most insane squat program ever devised. Clearly, however, it works- brutal squats take brutal training, and Klokov and Malanichev are proof of that.

"I just don't want to die without a few scars, I say. It's nothing anymore to have a beautiful stock body. You see those cars that are completely stock cherry, right out of a dealer's showroom in 1955, I always think, what a waste."- Tyler Durden

WRAPPING UP THE ROUTINES OF THE GREATS

Just as in the deadlift and the bench, there are a great many paths to glory in squat training. Though the lifters highlighted above don't seem to agree on much in their squat routines, there are a few commonalities from which we can learn.

- **Squat more**. Volume is the name of the game here, and the more you squat, the better you'll be at the lift. This does not necessarily mean you have to ape Kolkyaev's maniacal daily squatting regimen, but rather that you will likely need to increase your total squat workload if you're going to develop into a passable or elite squatter. For those who have chose to be deadlift specialists, your workload on the squat will be subsequently reduced, but you're still going to have to squat.
- **Go heavy**. You'll note on the preceding pages that all of the greats squatted primarily with very low rep ranges- a set of eight is fairly uncommon amongst great squatters. Thus, hard and heavy is the name of the game when squatting.

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MY METHOD FOR BUILDING A BADASS SQUAT

First and foremost, I'm of the opinion that your one rep max on the squat represents the sum total of all of the training you've done over your life. More so than any other lift, it is evidence of your unrelenting dedication to the development of physical strength and your continued efforts thereto. Thus, there is no quick fix for the squat. Certainly, tweaks to your form can help get your squat to change quickly, but those changes will be static without continued effort. Thus, there are three factors that I believe play heavily into building a squat that Milo of Croton would respect: **persistence**, **frequency**, and **intensity**.

PERSISTENCE

Unless you are mentally retarded, you should have a pretty clear understanding of what persistence is. Squatting is not something that comes easily to most, and it is grueling, taxing, and generally a bastard. As such, you really have to tap into your inner masochist, wrap your brain in a latex gimp suit, and whip your own ass to get it into the gym from time to time. This is not something to which elite lifters are immune, either— the more you train, the harder it's going to be to fill yourself with the kind of ferocity you need for a successful workout. Thus, you're going to have to accept that some of your squat workouts are just going to be washes— you're not going to be Billy bad-ass in every workout, and some of your lifts are going to downright suck. It's how the game goes. Your duty, in this case, is to look past it, take it as it comes, and just attack the next one. If that one sucks, attack the next one. I have had mental slumps that have last months, and I've had nagging injuries that dogged me for over a year. Around 2000, I attempted to do a one legged squat as a goof and lost my balance, pulling some muscles in my groin as I hopped around one-footed trying not to bust my ass. A couple of hours later, I squatted heavy, and suffered felt like the ghost of Albert Fish was haunting me by jamming red hot, 12" needles up through my groin and into my lower back for about a year after that every time I squatted or deadlifted. I continued performing those lifts, however, week in and week out, tweaking my form and my workouts as I went to minimize the discomfort as much as possible. That's what I'm referring to when I state that persistence is key.

- **If you're not masochistically enjoying squatting for some reason**, tinker with your rep ranges until you find one that's tolerable. I personally despise doing more than 5 reps on squat, and would rather simply not squat than do six reps. Sam Byrd is the polar opposite.
- **If squatting hurts your knees**, try squatting with a significantly wider stance to reduce the strain.
- **If your lower back hurts**, try moving your stance in and working high bar Olympic style squats to minimize lower back loading.
- **If you're bored with full rep squats in the same rep range**, alter the rep scheme or the exercise itself— there are plenty of alternatives with which to tinker, like front

squats, jump squats, box jumps, low box squats, high box squats, Zercher squats… The list goes on and on. You're only limited by your imagination here.

Though it might seem like I'm joking about mentally donning a gimp suit, I'm not. Squatting is fucking brutal. Accept it and move on— it's not a reason to avoid squatting, but rather a reason to attack and conquer squatting.

FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but unless you're Kirk Karwoski, you're likely not going to possess an elite squat unless you hammer that lift more than once a week. If you've chosen to make the deadlift your specialty, there's nothing wrong with sticking to one squat day a week to increase the number of days you pull, but frankly you might be better served by adding some light squats on a pulling day than avoiding them. Pavel Tsatsouline's theory of "greasing the groove", also known as the Hebbian Rule, has become rather famous of late, and refers to the phenomenon wherein successful performance of an action will create and strengthen the neural pathways associated with that action (Tsatsouline 17). The key to harnessing the benefit of Hebbian Theory is the completion of the reps, however, as failed efforts don't reinforce the neural pathway. This is why I rarely max out in the gym- I'll do singles with near-max weights, or triples with my 4 or 5 rep max, but I rarely train to failure. The "intensity multiplier" techniques of bodybuilders are focused on one thing- failure. In case you're unaware, failure rarely leads to victory. Thus, you train for victory to achieve it.

"Show me a good loser and I'll show you a loser."
– Bill Belichek, head coach of the New England Patriots

Beyond the "greasing the groove" of my sub-max poundages, there's another biochemical reason you should avoid frequently training to failure- the utilization of intensity multipliers when working out increases one's levels of cortisol significantly, which reduces one's ability to recover for future workouts, protein synthesis, and one's overall health. Additionally, training to failure reduces production of IGF-1, which has a negative impact on your ability to grow and retain skeletal muscle reduces your strength and power (Izquierdo et al). So, essentially, by training to failure, you're creating a metabolic shit show from which you're not likely to recover prior to your next session. This means you cannot train as much, which means you're limiting your subsequent workouts for no reason.

However, this does not in any way mean you should not push yourself in your workouts. This means you're going to need to be cognizant of the speed of execution of your lifts and gauge your ability to continue utilizing that. If a weight is flying up for triples in your first couple sets and it's a grinder for a single after a few sets, it's time to move on to something else. That's the beauty of high-frequency workouts— you can always make up for a shitty workout in the next. If you're limiting your squat workouts to once a week or once every ten days, you lose that ability, and every workout becomes do-or-die. Fuck all that— I'd rather have the ability to cut a subsequent workout short because I went for broke earlier in the week and dominated than feel like there is an axe hanging over my head every time I enter the gym to do a single lift infrequently.

Clearly, I'm not the progenitor of this theory. Old-school strongmen trained and exhibited their strength constantly. By constantly, I mean every fucking day. These guys were in heavy demand at the turn of the century, as evinced by Louis Cyr's salary of $2,000 a week in 1885 is equivalent to $47,000 now... There's not a fucking strength athlete on the planet who makes anything even vaguely approximating that these days. The strongmen of yesteryear were made of stern stuff, though, and due to their high demand and the fact that they'd not been inundated with pseudoscientific claptrap about "overtraining", they trained for hours a day, every day. Likewise, Arthur Saxon and Hermann Goerner trained 6 days a week, and regularly held exhibitions and contests to showcase their strength and prove their preeminence in the sport. Thereafter, guys like Paul Anderson, Bob Bednarski, and even Bill Pearl kept the flame of high frequency training alight, as they busted their asses in the gym 6 days a week, come hell or high water (Gallagher 15, 19-20).

There's always a catch though, right? The catch here is that even 20 years ago, people were far more active than they are now, so with every passing day the gap between the work capacity of yesteryear and that of the modern trainee grows greater. The resolution to this crisis, however, should be plainly evident- you need to increase your frequency. This does not necessarily mean, however, that you need to drag your ass into the gym twice a day and lift near-maximal weights until your eyes pop out and you shit blood. As much fun as that might sound, it's time to temper your enthusiasm with a modicum of sense— if you're fucking dead, your squat's not likely to increase much, is it? Thus, don't get stuck on stupid— approach this as you would a growling wild dog. That wild dog might tear a new hole in your ass, or it might wander up and lick your fingers, depending on how you approach it. Just as you would that dog, move slowly, keep calm, and don't do anything painfully stupid.

One of the best ways to go about this is to heed the advice of the Bulgarians, who found "that after 35-45 minutes of rigorous weight training, the body's natural blood testosterone level would decrease by up to 80%" (Costa 22). While you might find this to be somewhat exaggerated (Hermann Goerner reputedly lifted for three to four hours at a stretch), it's good to bear in mind, as it will keep you from training for hours nonstop on a regular basis. It also lends itself to the idea that high density training is ideal- "only when a muscle performs with greater resistance in a unit of time than before, will its functional cross section need to increase... hypertrophy is seen only in muscles that must perform a great amount of work in a unit of time" (Sisco and Little 7). This is why I generally recommend keeping your reps low and your rest periods very short— you'll easily increase your volume without overtaxing yourself, thereby allowing you to move more weight in the course of a week than you would otherwise. Low reps rarely leave you terribly sore.

If you're wondering how frequently you should train the squat, there is unfortunately no easy answer to this question— strength training demigod Vladimir Zatsiorsky himself states at the beginning of his seminal work that "it is absolutely unclear which criteria one should use for selecting proper intervals between consecutive workouts" (Zatsiorsky 13). As I've stated before, training capacity is a wildly shifting target, due to the massive number of individual factors, both biological and environmental, that play into its determination. For this reason, you're going to have to feel this one out like a blind man at an orgy. The most common frequency for squat training appears to be twice a week. I personally vacillate between two and four squat sessions a week, as a general rule, and I vary the rep scheme and exercise at every session. Thus, I rotate between full squats, weighted jump squats, front squats, partial back and front squats at a variety of ranges, and zercher squats at a variety of ranges of motion. If you skip back to the workouts of the greats, perhaps the greatest example of this methodology is Mikhail Koklyaev's routine. He trains the squat almost daily, but his workouts are never the length, Bollywood-esque horror shows you'll see printed in bodybuilding magazines. Instead, they're brief, heavy, and comprised solely of low rep sets.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW SQUAT, YOU NEED THESE ROUTINES

RUNNING THE LADDER

Like I stated in the deadlifting section, I did this program a great deal in my early years after picking it up from an Iron Man magazine and used it for both the squat and the deadlift. I never used this routine more than once a week for either lift, though I did use it for both lifts in the same week. For instance, I might use this set/rep scheme for the squat on Tuesday and the deadlift on Friday. This was due more to the fact that at the time I'd not considered using a full-body routine, and my lifts suffered as I adhered to a body part routine. I spread back and legs as far from one another as I could, however, to maximize recovery from one to another and ensure that my deadlift and squat didn't adversely affect each other. Yeah, I labored under the misapprehension that I had the recovery ability of a burn victim with cancer and AIDS for years as well. Assuming a 405 max, this is what running the ladder would look like.

1 x 10 x 135
1 x 8 x 225
1 x 6 x 275
1 x 4 x 315
1 x 2 x 355
1 x 2 x 365-375
1 x 4 x 315
1 x 6 x 285
1 x 8 x 265
1 x 10 x 225

The key in this routine is to make sure that your second half of the ladder is noticeably heavier than the first half. It's great for breaking plateaus and ruts, and also for getting your comfortable with your form on the deadlift.

MIGHT AS WELL JUMP

This program grew out of a short write up in a *Muscular Development* magazine that stated that the use of an explosive movement prior to a grinding strength movement would lead to greater strength and hypertrophy gains. I was never able to hunt down that article again, but I've used it pretty much continuously since I started competing two years ago to keep my IT bands loose (dropping into the hole of a very deep squat acts as an explosive stretch for me), and it seems to have kept my squat numbers on the rise.

Weighted Jump Squats (Assuming my current max jump squat of 500)
1 x 3 x 135, 225, 315, 405
6-10 x 2 x 455

Partial Back or Front Squat (I vary between just above bottom-position, half, and quarter squats)

Work up to 3RM
6-10 x 3 x 3RM (This is one of the few exercises on which I go to failure, and I extend my rest periods to allow me to keep getting 2-3 reps. Hold each rep for 10 seconds at the top)

BRINGING ASSISTANTS INTO THE RACK

Clearly, you're not going to be able to bring training partners onto the platform to help you out in on the squat in competition. That is why you're going to have to create your own, by building your midsection, hamstrings, and calves into muscle groups so hyper-developed that they might as well have their own social security numbers.

Abs and Lower Back- Frankly, I am of the opinion that partial squats done without a belt are the single best method by which one can strengthen their abs. Using those, my abs and lower back have gotten so strong that I was able to squat 605 in competition without wearing a belt. Beyond that, I recommend the following:

- **The ab wheel**. This is a $10 piece of equipment everyone should own, as it strengthens your abs like nothing else.
- **Standing crunches**. You'll need either a standing crunch machine or ab straps like the ones Spud Inc. sells, but these are a great way to strengthen your abs and lower back.
- **Heavy weighted crunches**. These would be done on a regular seated crunch machine, and I do them both lighter, for time, and heavier with as much weight as I can handle for 6-12 reps.

You'll notice that good mornings are conspicuously absent from this list. That is because I consider them completely worthless. They might be useful for geared lifters, but I have never seen a raw lifter worth half a shit bother with these, and I've never gotten any benefit from them.

Hamstrings- I began training hamstrings due to theory I had regarding my patellar tendinitis, which I attributed a hamstring/quadriceps strength imbalance. I started doing light standing hamstring curls on a nearly daily basis, and my knee pain vanished almost instantly. I've also found that my ascent out of the hole has gotten much better since I started training hamstrings regularly. Thus, I recommend:

- **Standing hamstring curls**. I generally do 3-6 sets of 6-15 repetitions on these between three and five times a week.
- **Glute–ham raises**. As I covered in the deadlifting section, you don't need specialized equipment to do these, and they should be done for fewer reps than hamstring curls.

I don't do lying hamstring curls due to the pressure they put on the knee joint, and lack the flexibility to do seated hamstring curls through a full range of motion. I don't bother with stiff legged or Romanian deadlifts due to the fact that I have to go far too heavy on those to make them an accessory movement. As such, they're too taxing to be considered a true accessory movement in my opinion, and are better used as an alternative to regular deadlifts on a scheduled deadlifting day.

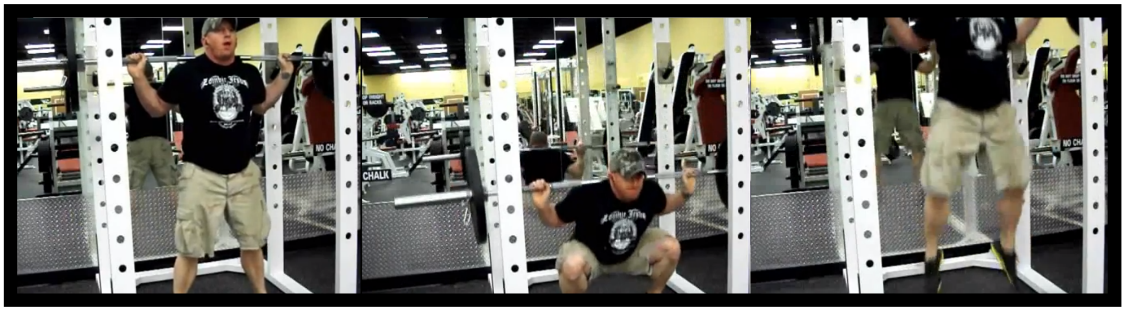
Calves- Strong calves are invaluable in the squat due to the walkout. Without strong calves, your workout will range anywhere between impossible and utterly nightmarish. Thus, I recommend doing frequent, heavy, unilateral calf raises. Doing your calf raises (whichever kind you prefer) one leg at a time will address any muscular imbalances you have between your legs.

SQUAT VARIANTS YOU SHOULD BE DOING

It's not enough to simply back squat, quite frankly, if you want to be an awesome squatter. I don't mean that you should head for the nearest hack squat machine and start slamming out some super sweet reps on that utterly fantastic machine (this is called sarcasm, in case you're confused), but rather that there is more to the squat than meets the eye. Thus, allow me to introduce you to a couple of the best friends a squatter could have:

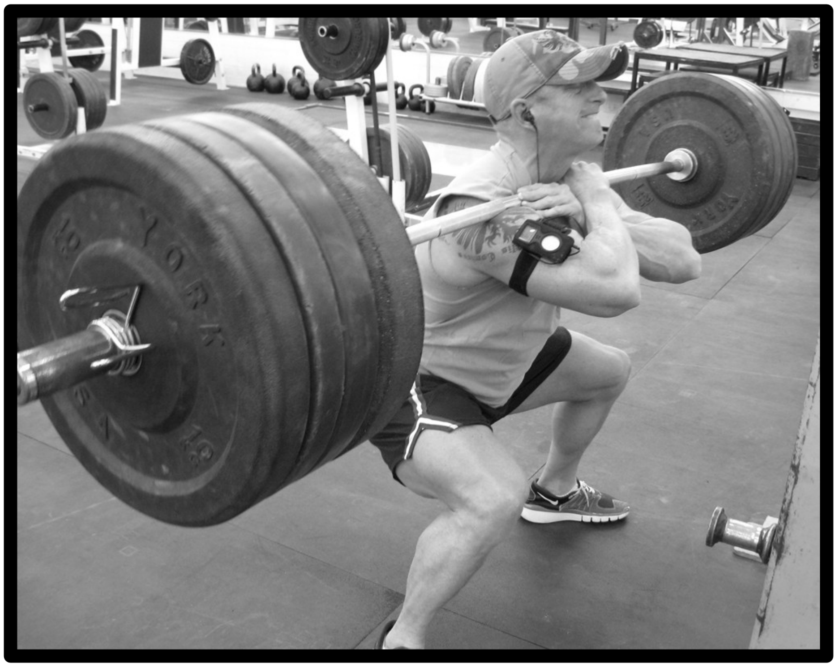
THE JUMP SQUAT

The jump squat is to the competition back squat what liquid Viagra is to porn stars— it enables you to perform at the highest levels without fear that you're going to go limp in the middle of the competition and make a total ass of yourself. The jump squat makes getting out of the hole (the bottom of the squat) a simple affair, because you've conditioned your body to literally explode out of that position. The powerlifting back squat is a fundamentally slow affair, and could easily be conducted to the slower parts of a Wagnerian opera in a Viking helmet. Slowly grinding through the squat sucks, though, and the very worst part is that second at the bottom wherein you pause for a moment to wonder "is it really possible to get the fuck out of here with my life?" For this reason, I despise pause squats, because it makes sitting in the hole an even more protracted affair. If you regularly include jump squats in your program and go heavy on them, that moment of indecision will be lost in a thoughtless explosion of muscular force the likes of which the world hasn't seen since JFK first got Marilyn Monroe naked in the White House. Additionally, a long term study in Russia in the 1980s showed that the utilization of different tempos in a training cycle produced far greater strength gains and hypertrophy than did a single tempo (Verkhoshanskii). Thus, it makes sense to include these regularly in your workouts.



Suggested Set and Rep Scheme: I don't recommend high reps for these due to the fact that your speed drops precipitously as your reps increase. Thus, 4-10 x 1-5 would be best.

Form Tips: Vary your stance on these. You will have to keep the bar higher on your shoulders to prevent it from slipping, but you can still change your stance to alter the loading on your quadriceps and hips.



THE FRONT SQUAT

No matter your sport, the front squat can have a profound positive effect on your lower body strength. The front squat places the primary emphasis on the quads, so it's a great companion exercise if you're a low bar, wide stance squatter, as wide stance squatting focuses the bulk of the load on your hips.

Suggested Set and Rep Scheme: 4-10 x 1-5, once again. There's really no point in doing higher rep sets if you're interested in improving your competition squat, as taming the beast that is fear and getting used to a heavy, uncomfortable weight driving you downward is key to mastering the squat.

Form Tips: You have three options in terms of the way you grip the bar on the front squat. No matter which you choose, however, the bar will essentially rest on your neck, as it's your front delts that hold the bar in place. As such, you can squat hands-free if you wish, because your hands are more or less redundant. If you cannot take your hands off the bar without it slipping off your delts, the bar is in the wrong position. As for where to put your hands, you can either hold the bar in an Olympic-style clean catch position, cross your arms like a bodybuilder and hold the bar in place with your thumb and forefinger, or you can hook your straps around the bar and hold onto those. If you choose the form I do (bodybuilder style) I would recommend against hooking your thumb all the way around the bar, as it generally hurt and can pinch nerves and reduce circulation to your thumbs. Regardless, vary your stance as in the jump squat.

The straps variation on the front squat.

THE PARTIAL SQUAT (for advanced lifters only)

The partial squat is one of my favorite movements, although I wouldn't really recommend it for neophytes, as they really need to get the basics down before messing with the formula too much. Thus, if you've not lifted for at least three years, stick to the back squat, the front squat, and the jump squat.

Suggested Set and Rep Scheme: 6-10 x 1-3, with the inclusion of the occasional death set. This movement is really about moving heavy-ass weight, not getting in a ton of work. Frankly, this is something you can do a lot of if you're not doing bottom-position squats every time.

Form Tips: My favorite method for performing these is at or just above the bottom position of your squat. It's god-awful the first time you try it, but if you work it hard, it is the easiest way to get your squat up quickly— the more weight you can move from a dead stop at the bottom of your squat, the more weight you can squat in general. I use this as an indicator of what my competition squat is going to be— if I can bottom position squat 600, for instance, I am 100% certain I am good for 635, and have a pretty good shot at 660. On the other end of the spectrum you have lockouts and top half squats, which are useful for feeling out weight and strengthening your abs and lower back. If you're doing the former, there's no real reason to hold the weight at the top of the movement, but if you're doing the latter, a 5 to 10 second hold makes the most of the movement. At the end of an ultra-heavy festival of half squats, you will literally feel like a human bulldozer— not terribly agile, but fucking unstoppable.

BASIC TIPS ON THE SQUAT ITSELF

This will probably be a fairly unpopular opinion, but I believe there's not that much to the squat, other than training it. Clearly, I've done a lot of tweaking with my form over the years to arrive at what works for me, but the sum total of my knowledge there will help exactly one person on Earth squat better- me. With that in mind, here are a couple of things that I believe are pretty much universal.

- **Show me your tits**. Before you get all excited that I've snuck boobs into the book, settle down— I haven't. When I show chicks in particular how to squat, I tell them to show me how a slut stands. They always stick their tits and ass way out, which is basically the position in which you should be in when you squat. A less interesting way to say it would be "chest full, head up, ass back" which is what you should be repeating to yourself every time you get into the squat rack. Eyes looking straight ahead at the top of your head if you're looking in the mirror, chest as full as you can back it, and reaching your ass as far back as you possibly can as you descend. One fascinating trend on the internet currently is a preoccupation with "butt wink". For those of you living in blissful ignorance, "butt wink" occurs when you tuck your ass at the bottom of a squat. If you do it, you're squatting incorrectly. When you squat, you should be reaching your ass back like you're trying to find a chair you know is somewhere behind you in a dark room. Rather than bust your ass on the ground, you force it behind you like it's a spear you're using to fend off a particularly ugly stalker at a really cool bar. You know, the kind of bar that allows you to bring in a spear. If you're reaching your ass that far back, tucking it is a physical impossibility.

- **Do not deload to the bar**. Even the weakest asshole on Earth can squat more than 45 lbs, and using nothing but the bar does not give you an accurate picture of what your squat looks like. In order to determine how to squat, you'll need to have some weight on the bar to ensure your leverages are correct. Limitations in flexibility will also cause your squat form to change if the weight on the bar is too light, which will also give you an incorrect picture of what your squat form is and should look like. Thus, if you *must* do a form check, do it with something along the lines of a three to five repetition maximum.
- **If your squat is stuck, have someone look at it from the front or back, rather than the side**. Nearly every time I've seen someone with a squat that is truly stuck, it's the result of one thing— their weight is improperly distributed between their legs. You can see this from the front because their ass will gravitate toward one side or the other. There's a very simple way to fix this- make a conscious effort to force your ass to the other side as you squat. It will feel incredibly unnatural at first, but if you feel like you're forcing your ass so far to the other side that you're in danger of falling over like a drunk chick at the aforementioned spear bar, your ass is probably dead center. Keep working that for a couple of weeks and then have someone recheck it. Within a month, your squat will be up and you won't have to worry about your weight distribution again. This is usually a problem with new trainees and people who've had a lower back or lower body injury.
- **Fear makes you strong**. If you're not afraid of a weight you're using for your top weight sets, you're definitely not going heavy enough. You should be so piss-scared of the weight you use for doubles that you consider skipping the gym altogether. If you're not, you're definitely stronger than you think, and need to raise the weight. We're talking Manchurian peasant fear of the Japanese Army circa 1940 kind of fright- this is not a mild discomfort sort of fear, but a fill-your-pants-with-liquid-shit-because-100,000-armed-Mongols-are-bearing-down-on-you sort of fear. Master it and you'll master the squat. Succumb to it and your squat will forever suck.

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In my opinion, the squat gives you the exact measure of a man or woman. If you're a great squatter, you're damn near fearless and possibly indestructible. If you're a shit squatter, you have no work ethic and you're likely to piss yourself at the sight of a dwarf clown holding a bouquet of posies. No matter whether or not you choose to become a squat specialist, you need to make the squat a cornerstone of your workout. Failure to do so will invariably lead to mockery from friends and family and dismal showings at meets, and will prevent you from becoming as awesome as you know you can be.

BECOMING WHOLE

There is nothing mystical about powerlifting or developing extreme strength. There is no arcane process through which one is magically bestowed with strength, and no elixir yet created by science that can make you a champion. Despite what you may read or hear, no chemical or hormone you could possibly consume can confer upon you the great strength you desire. Instead, the secret lies within you— desire is the ultimate monkey, and you must feed and care for it. In order to achieve greatness, you must crave it. You must be filled with a burning desire to achieve it and crush anything in your path that stands between you and your goal. Any person who has greatly exceeded his or her peers in anything will attest to this. Thus, all of the knowledge in the world will not help you if you are not filled with an all-consuming desire to achieve your goals. I cannot emphasize this enough— there is no program on Earth that will make you a great lifter if it is not matched by the drive to be one. You can achieve great strength without a great program, but the obverse is unfortunately not true.

In a recent discussion with a friend, he asserted that I was a genetic freak to be so strong. I countered that I have, in fact, six and a half inch wrists. I could not possibly be less perfectly constructed for physical strength. If you're curious as to my reasoning for using that metric, it was a commonly used metric for determining one's genetic potential in the 19th Century, and stands as one of the best indicators for the development of great strength in my mind. Luckily, it's not a failsafe method for predicting one's potential. Nevertheless, I continued that I didn't show great potential when I began lifting. Unlike Bill Kazmeier, I didn't bench 350 the very first time I attempted the lift. Likewise, Trent Richardson (standout Alabama running back and current NFL pro) power cleaned nearly that much with little or no instruction in the lift when he entered Alabama's program. I, on the other hand, got pinned beneath 135 the first time I tried to bench it. There is no way I am "genetically gifted", I claimed, unless being prone to fits of wild anger and so aggressive that I will physically injure myself to win a competition for which I'm neither trained or prepared constitutes a genetic gift. That, he claimed, was my genetic gift— my inability to accept defeat. My desire to be the absolute best at everything is my genetic gift, according to him, and is the reason for my success.

I'm beginning to think he's right.

My success in powerlifting is not the result of what I'm currently doing. Certainly, my current program has contributed to my success, but the greatest factor in my current success is my historical efforts to better myself on a daily basis. For almost 20 years, I have constantly looked for a better way to diet, a better way to train, and this desire for physical and mental improvement has become so ingrained in my persona that dieting and training are part of my daily habits. For almost twenty years, I've trained no fewer than four times a week and usually far more than that. In that time, I've never taken a full week off from the gym, had a sustained back off period, or let my diet slip below the "pretty good" line for more than a couple of weeks. That means that in the 18 years I've been training, I have, at a minimum, lifted weights for about 6000 hours. The reality is that I've trained far more than that. For those of you bemoaning your lack of progress, consider exactly how much you train per week. I personally train 6-10 hours a week, and have for years. If you're a 3 days a week guy, you're lucky to train 5 hours a week. If you train 50 weeks in a year, you're only getting 250 hours a year. Neurologists have found, however, that world class experts in any discipline must have 10,000 hours of practice under their belt before they achieve mastery (Gladwell 40). If that's the case, even at the upper end of my average, I'm still short about 600 hours. If you're feeling a little slow today, let me clue you in on a little secret— given that statistical fact, the reason why the Russians, Chinese, and Bulgarians are so successful in Olympic weightlifting has a lot to do with the fact that their weightlifters devote their entire lives to weightlifting and train for 6-8 hours a day, starting at a young age. At that pace, training perhaps 35 hours a week and taking two weeks off a year, it would take less than six years to become a master at their sport. Most Westerners have no such luxury, or such desire— we're busy with the mall, Xbox, school, friends, and pretty much anything else we can think of when we're young, and as we get older our lives are consumed by our workday. Thus, we're at a pointed disadvantage when pitted against people who can only live a Western lifestyle if they achieve mastery in a sport and earn accolades for doing so. Thus, if you want to become a badass lifter, you're going to have to start by clearing out a considerable portion of your schedule to do so.

If you're part of what I consider to be my target demographic (primarily male, 18-30), you likely have plenty of time to train. You lack a family, weighty responsibilities, and probably work 30 hours a week or less. In college, I trained five or six days a week on top of wrestling practice, and in the summers lifted twice a day, played a variety of sports daily, and worked. My total physical activity level, between lifting and sports, likely topped 20 hours a week. At night, while watching movies, my buddies and I even held daily pushup and sit up competitions— not because we had to, but because it was fucking fun. All of that, however, inured me to high training volume and made strength training and general physicality a normal part of my everyday life. Training was nothing special— it's just what we did every day for fun. That is the type of mentality that will take you further than any training program will, and will lead you to success in strength sports later in life.

"In the end not only is it permitted to make this experiment; the conscience of method demands it. Not to assume several kinds of causality until the experiment of making do with a single one has been pushed to its utmost limit (to the point of nonsense, if I may say so)"(Nietzsche 36).

You should, at this point, have a fairly comprehensive idea of the massive task I've laid before you. Five Minute Abs and P90X are all fine and dandy for your average couch potato to see their abs, and cookie-cutter programs are fine for people too lazy or committed to devote themselves fully to the task of dominating the sport of powerlifting. They'll remain on the sidelines, watching as you dominate your competition, provided you do everything humanly possible to obtain victory and enjoy yourself while doing it. Strength training is but one aspect of a trifecta of factors that will play into your performance on the platform. The other two factors, mental preparation and diet, are equally important as the training itself, and without attention to those details you will ultimately fail.

A Word About Special Snowflake Syndrome and Srs Bros

Fans of the blog Stuff You Will Hate will recognize this moniker immediately, but for those of you who are unaware of its existence, special snowflake syndrome is a malady affecting many of the people you see around you of late, and is characterized by a belief that there is something special about you tha separates you from the rest of the pack. Generally, this leads a person to believe that they are better than others, but the defining characteristic is often, weirdly, a negative attribute. The worst culprit in strength training the persistent belief in the existence of the "hardgainer", which is a term bandied about by the lazy to explain their lack of progress. There is no such thing as a "hardgainer"— there are only people who do not train hard enough, eat correctly, or get enough sleep. This is not an issue of who uses which drugs or supplements—this is entirely a function of who trains and diets correctly and who does not.

The other phenomenon detailed frequently by the guys at SYWH is that of the Srs Bros— people who take themselves and the shit they do way too seriously. Interestingly, people mistake me for one of them on occasion due to my emphatic writing style. I really don't take lifting all that seriously— it's something I do because I enjoy it, rather than because I think it's some noble cause. I couldn't possibly give a shit less if people around me lift. I assume they'd do it if they wanted to and if they don't, it's because they dislike it. There are a great many people on the internet who take themselves and strength sports incredibly seriously while 1) being generally uneducated and weak, and 2) appearing to enjoy the discussion of lifting far more than lifting itself. Don't be one of those guys— you suck the fun out of lifting for yourself and others. Endless discussions about which training protocol are best are pointless (that much should be readily apparent) and boring, and it's effort that would be far better spent in the gym. Don't waste your enthusiasm pounding out vociferous missives about who's on gear and who's natty, or who's doing what and who is a jackass, and just fucking lift. That's the only way you're going to get stronger, and really the only way to prove any point you might make in a discussion about lifting, anyway. Never forget that lifting is really just an enjoyable pastime, at the end of the day, and not a job. Oh, and be sure to tell the Srs bros to go fuck themselves at every opportunity— the question "Do you even lift, bro?" should be rhetorical when you address them. I assure you that they do not.

DIET

Diet is really a subject for an entirely separate book. It's an incredibly complex topic, and one that deserves far more treatment than a training manual should provide. It is, however, a cornerstone of successful strength sport competition, and one that will completely hamstring you should you ignore it. Though it's not necessary that you get ripped to the fucking bone to compete in strength sports, you might as well use a competition as an excuse to bring your abs out of hiding. They're likely not Jewish, so there's no reason for them to be treating your abdominal fat like's it the fucking attic and their names are all Anne Frank. For those of you who want to remain fat, go read something else and try not to burn any calories doing so— I'd hate for you to develop vascularity or some other indication that a heart attack's not your idea of a normal Saturday afternoon. If you look back over the preceding pages at the lifters I've highlighted, all of them look like athletes— they're all lean, vascular, and obviously muscular. As such, you should be following a diet that enables you to look like the strength athlete you're trying to be. Thus, it's time to pick a diet and stick with it for a while. If you're concerned about losing strength, don't be, for a couple of reasons:

- **Dieting keeps you focused on training, and vice versa**. The harder you diet, the harder you'll train. The obverse is definitely not true. If you eat sloppily, you will not care as much when you hit the gym, because you've already made a shitload of concessions about your training (in the fuel selection), so you're retreating from success before you even touch a bar. If you're entering the gym pissed off and a little hungry from dieting, you'll take out your frustration on the weights, and you'll want to break your fucking ass so that the effort of dieting isn't wasted.
- **Provided you're eating ample protein and not in a ridiculous caloric deficit, you'll not lose muscle or strength from dieting**. Anyone who says otherwise was dieting

like a bodybuilder, which is fucking retarded. Bodybuilders diet the way they do because they're mentally weak and rely on drugs to do the majority of the work. In strength sports, you do all the heavy lifting— a vial of test has never lifted a goddamned thing.

- **Even if you managed to lose strength, dropping fat means dropping weight, which means dropping weight classes**. As such, your relative strength will likely rise. For instance, you decide to do a meet, and you currently have a 1500 lb total at 200 lbs, with 15% bodyfat. You diet your ass off, and in 5 months are 181 with 6% bodyfat, a badass set of abs, but only a 1450 total (which would be HIGHLY unlikely, but this is just for the sake of argument). Your Wilks coefficient would have increased from 432.66 to 441.909, meaning you're actually much better off in terms of getting best lifter than you would have been as a fat 198 lber.

All of this is, of course, nonsense. One's primary concern when entering a strength competition is winning. As such, you should be focused entirely on what it takes to win. If you're already focused on what it would take to win, you should be focused on what you can do to fucking embarrass everyone around you for even showing up. Thus, having the highest possible relative strength should be your primary concern, rather than the greatest absolute strength. This, of course, flies in the face of the conventional online wisdom that "he who lifts the most wins", as anyone who's not a sloppy fucking mass of adipose tissue would be far more impressed with a stupendous lift by a guy with visible musculature than they would with a Louis Cyr lookalike's world-shattering lift. This is why everyone shits their pants about Stan Efferding, Joe Ladnier, and Matt Kroczaleski when there's a new record broken in the squat by a different circus fat man every 45 minutes. This is also the reason why most of you know who 170 lb Bulgarian Olympic Ivan Stoitsov is, and have seen his pic a thousand times, but have no idea who Tatiana Kashirina is, in spite of the fact that she probably clean and jerks what you deadlift.

If you're wondering why no one knows the name of the fat Russian chick who holds the world record in the clean and press and the snatch (a chick who probably outlifts the vast majority of us on just about everything), don't. Fat people aren't really people— they're placeholders where people should be. No one wants to neither look at them, strong or not, nor be around them long enough to locate their genitalia and procreate. They look like shit, wheeze when they breathe, and are in mortal danger of stroking out when doing anything other than doing a single repetition on one of their pet exercises or eating. This doesn't change much when a fat guy or girl picks up something heavy- we expect them to be able to do so when the object they're lifting is a fraction of their bodyweight, no matter how heavy that object is.

Thus, if really doesn't matter that a fat person is all that strong. You might be thinking, however, that you're not necessarily morbidly obese, but just have a "powerful torso" or some such. All that means is that you're leaving weight on the table by which you might be able to fuck up the competition, because you're carrying bodyweight that serves no positive purpose. For instance, if you're competing 235 and sitting on something around 20% body fat, you're doing yourself a fucking disservice if you're competing at 242 because you're too fucking lazy to diet a bit. That extra body fat is doing nothing but holding you back from greatness, as you could ostensibly be crushing shit at 220, or dominating everyone and looking ridiculous (Chinese Olympic weightlifting style) at 198.

Getting lean is not, as some people would have it, the death knell for a lifter's total. Provided cutting is done sensibly and fairly slowly, one's strength can rather easily be maintained, and can even be increased slowly if the cut is managed correctly. The added volume you'll probably implement to cut the weight will just contribute to your total workload in the gym, and you could see random lifts jump up as you increase your mobility and strength to weight ratio. Additionally, you won't feel like you need a nap if you have to take the stairs one day when the power goes out.

Throw on top of that the fact that strength does not increase proportionally with bodyweight— the law of diminishing returns kicks in like a motherfucker. This means endless weight gains to silence the fat guys talking shit on some message board are probably pointless. At some point, you're going to hit a wall where your body is pretty much at its upper limit for maximizing strength for your bodyweight. Thereafter, your strength gains will probably be incremental, while your bodyweight increases could be exponential. There's no point in asking other people at what point that will occur, either— it's entirely individual and completely unpredictable. Thus, you should experiment with your bodyweight to find your "sweet spot".

While strength athletics don't generally require bodybuilder levels of leanness, anyone this side of Ray Charles can see a trend emerging amongst the dominant elite in powerlifting and strongman- they're fucking lean. Take a look at the guys who are dominating these days— Matt Kroczaleski, Derek Poundstone, Mariusz Pudzianowski, Konstantin Konstantinovs, and Stan Efferding are all shredded... even perennial chubby guy Phil Pfister's gotten lean in the last few years, and the world's strongest woman, Aneta Florczyk, is lean (and hot). This means that before you even bother cutting water weight, you're going to need to drop some fat. I've outlined ways to do so on http://chaosandpain.blogspot.com and will eventually release a book about my Apex Predator Diet. If you're unfamiliar with my dietary strategies, I've long been a fan of ketogenic diets and think they're perfect for strength sports in particular, due to the fact that they provide you with the necessary nutritional basis to maintain a good hormonal profile. Additionally, they're excellent for powerlifting because making weight is always an issue for highly competitive lifters, and the paucity of carbs gives you a better idea of your true weight because you hold much less water when on such a diet.

MENTAL

I've caught a lot of shit since I began writing about strength training and nutrition for being "angry", "mean", and most amusingly a "meathead". Clearly, the last one is pretty thoroughly off-base, though the first two are a bit closer to the mark. My writing style in indeed to be aggressive and offensive because aggressive and offensive writing are interesting. As for the anger I apparently direct at you, the reader, some of you have my intent wrong. I'm not berating you for being weak— I'm berating my readers for believing that they should be weak. The reason I make such a big deal out of my humble strength training beginnings is because I was, for years, a chubby nerd. In the fifth grade, my nickname was "The Human Dictionary", and I was always picked for group projects but never for sports teams. As such, I was about as ill-suited for impressive physical strength as one could imagine. What I did have, however, was contempt for the opinions of other people that bordered on sociopathic and a belief in myself that could only have been construed as psychotic by my peers. Provided you have those two things, you can quite literally achieve any goal you set for yourself.

"It you believe you can or if you believe you can't… you're right"
-Henry Ford

That's right— the only thing standing in the way of your greatness is your lack of belief in yourself. Ellen Langer explained in her book *Counterclockwise* that the second step in the "psychology of possibility" is to try out new things without evaluating ourselves as we go along (Langer 16). The lack of evaluation of essential for exceeding who and what you are, and who you think you could be. If you push yourself to try new shit, things you thought were the sole purview of Superman and Dmitri Klokov, you could surprise yourself. The key, however, is to leave your judgment of yourself behind. You cannot walk into the gym wearing a powdered wig and swinging a gavel at every opportunity— should you do so, you remove both the possibility for experimentation and any probability of greatness, because you'll be too fucking busy talking shit to yourself, convincing yourself that you're incapable and weak and useless as everyone around you to attack the fucking weights and be the human being you never thought you could be.

It's also essential that isolate yourself from people from time to time (or as I do with my headphones), because society will tell you that you're incapable, that you're weak, that you're unable to handle the workload, or the weight, or the exercise, or that you've hit your genetic limit and cannot possibly go any further. In interdependent communities, people will turn against you if you're perceived as different— "people who departed from the norm could be dangerous to the whole community— whether they were rich or very poor. Either way, there was a tendency to seek the center and to resent people who were misfits" (Brafman 124). If you haven't looked around the gym recently, you might want to take note of this, because gyms are thoroughly interdependent communities. Everyone's banging everyone, everyone's watching everyone, and the gossip mill has something to say about everyone. You probably know more crazy, bullshit rumors about the people in your gym than you do about your own family members, and you know more about the guys who lift on your "shift" at the gym than you do about the most prominent lifters in your sport. As such, anything you do that runs counter to the norm is being constantly evaluated, judged, and likely talked down when you're not around because that's human nature.

Like I stated earlier, however, you're not going to become a Superman overnight, and it's not going to be an easy road. Start by changing your mindset when you're entering the gym. When you walk into the gym, you need to flip a switch in your head and decide that you feel indomitable, like an immovable object, a force that cannot possibly be opposed. I don't mean that you necessarily need to act like Captain Kirk and throw peoples' shit around the gym, screaming like a maniac. Instead, you just need to determine how to create a mindset in which you're so infused with positive aggression and overall positivity that you feel invincible. You need to do this because your mind controls your body, and if you constantly proclaim to it that you're awesome, it will have no choice but to physically realize that thought. That is why I'll generally suggest that someone try harder and get more pumped up before a deadlift attempt rather than spending time dissecting their form. Form is usually not the issue on a deadlift— motivation is.

Lest you worry that we've ventured out of the realm of science into some esoteric, happy-go-lucky, Tim Robbins bullshit, we haven't. It has been proven ad infinitum that one's mind is far more powerful than one's body, and that one can alter one's physiological processes simply through the power of one's mind. I'm not suggesting that meditation will enable you to levitate your next squat personal record attempt, either— I'm stating that you can actually make yourself stronger, bigger, and leaner through the use of positive thought, and have likely held yourself back in the past by obsessing over how you're destined to be nothing but fat and weak, because your body will alter itself to match your perception of reality.

Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is that of a sect of Tibetan monks in Northern India, who are able to drastically alter their body temperature to stave off hypothermia through the utilization of intense meditation. Using a yoga technique known as g Tum-mo, they entered a state of deep meditation. Other monks soaked 3-by-6-foot sheets in cold water (49 degrees Fahrenheit) and placed them over the meditators' shoulders. For untrained people, such frigid wrappings would produce uncontrolled shivering. If body temperatures continue to drop under these conditions, death can result. Instead of deciding that they were all going to die as a result of their conditions, the monks utilized the power of positive thought to raise their internal temperatures to the point that the sheets dried in about an hour. These guys didn't just do that once, either— they did it with three successive sheets in a row, to prove that there were no shenanigans afoot— these guys were just that awesome (Cromie). Similarly, monks in Sikkam, India can lower their metabolisms by 64%, and other monks in the Himalayas have been documented sleeping in sub-zero temperatures with only a thin cotton blanket as protection from the elements. Despite this fact, the monks didn't even so much as fucking shiver in response to the cold, as they simply did not believe in its effects.

At this point, you're likely checking out mentally and coming to the conclusion that I'm full of shit, but there is no other way I could have gone from chubby nerd to champion powerlifter without my belief in myself, and this is why I get so ripshit pissed reading the defeatism and pathetic excuse-making with which internet message boards are rife. Like me, you can literally will yourself to be awesome. This works with every segment of society, as well. Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer proved that she could induce weight loss in hotel maids by explaining to them exactly how many calories they burned while working— they had thought they burned far fewer calories, and when she convinced them they were incorrect, their metabolisms raised to match their beliefs (Spiegel). Similarly, studies have shown that the placebo effect is so strong that 32% of severely depressed people show marked improvements with a sugar pill, compared to only 50% who actually receive medication for their illness (Lipton 110). In most clinical trials, "fake" drugs prove just as effective as the real ones, simply because the people being tested believe in their effectiveness (Lipton108-9). This is not simply limited to drugs, either— a 2002 study at Baylor School of Medicine showed that a faked knee surgery was just as effective at reducing chronic knee pain as was the $5000 surgery, a fact that the doctors conducting the experiment found massively disconcerting (Ibid).

By the same token, you can royally fuck yourself up with negative thoughts. I've always fucking detested spotters who will call the lifter a pussy while he's lifting, or other assorted nonsense. That sort of negativity has never, and will never, work. It's another thing altogether, however, to do shit out of spite. I would guess that no less than 60% of my life's accomplishments were motivated by spite— I will do insane shit simply to prove other people wrong, and then rub their faces in their mistake. Thus, to think to yourself that "so and so thinks I'm a fucking pussy, but I've got their fucking pussy" and then crush a bunch of weights in outright defiance of their suggestion is actually the power of positive thinking at work. You're proving what you know to be the truth (that you're a fucking badass) is in fact the case, and using spite and contempt to fuel your efforts at producing proof. It's a subtle distinction, but a vastly important one.

If you let your thoughts remain negative, however, you're fucked. Just as the placebo effect can work in your favor (I've heard of people gaining weight and getting stronger within 24 hours of taking "oral GH", for instance), it can fuck you up royally. In 1974, a guy named Sam Londe was diagnosed with esophageal cancer, a disease for which there's little hope of recovery once it's in an advanced stage. Londe was given a couple of months to live, and he ended up dying in a few weeks— in spite of the fact that an autopsy showed that the initial diagnosis was incorrect, and he showed almost no cancerous cells in his throat (Lipton 111). The man literally died because he was supposed to. This effect, called the nocebo effect, can have just as profound an impact on your health and lifts, but in a massively negative way.

For those of you still unconvinced, I can understand your skepticism. Whether it's the effects of the mind on quantum physics (as asserted by Lipton and friends) or that reality is mere perception, and that one can change in on a whim (like the Buddhists and Hindus think), or if it's simply that we've some untapped reserve of energy that can affect our internal chemistry on an atomic level— our minds control our bodies. Thus, I implore you— stop being so fucking negative about yourself and buck the fuck up. I am living proof of the fact that you're likely more awesome than you think.

Go be awesome.

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION PROGRAMS

The following programs are simply a base from which you can operate. They're not set in stone, and they're not gospel. I have never operated under a strict program, in the entirety of my lifting life, and have no interest in forcing others to do so. You should note that you can no more take the spreadsheet of the programs without the accompanying write-ups any more than you can make cinnamon toast without the cinnamon and the sugar, or have a drunken bear without a Russian circus. In the former example, it will taste fucking horrible, and in the latter, you'll just be some random asshole getting eaten by a bear. Either way, it's not going to work out in your favor. Thus, pay attention to the write-ups that go with the programs.

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION FOR BEGINNERS

Exercise Group	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Squat	4 x 6				4 x 6		
Deadlift			5 x 6				
Bench	4 x 6				4 x 6		
Strict Military Press	3 x 10		3 x 6		3 x 10		
Pull		4 x 6		4 x 6			
Push Accessory	3 x 10		4 x 6		3 x 10		
Pull Accessory		3 x 10		3 x 10			
Upper Body Minor Accessory		3 x 10		3 x 10			
Lower Body Minor Accessory		3 x 10		3 x 10			

For the opening salvo in your infant powerlifting career, you're going to have to get down the basics. As I stated earlier in the book, I've no interest in reinventing the wheel— this is a pretty basic beginner program. This program is really for people with no background in powerlifting but some experience lifting, however little. Stick with something like this for three to six months and then move on. Should you feel the volume is too low (for instance, if you're an athlete used to a much higher level of physical exercise, add sets wherever you like. If you're hideously sore after doing so, back it off in a subsequent workout. If you kill yourself right out of the gate adding sets and reps, you're going to be far less likely to continue lifting. Thus, just try to get used to hitting the gym five days a week at the outset. The key at the beginning of starting a program isn't making initial gains— it's making going to the gym a habit that will be hard to break in the future. The gains will come, provided you're applying yourself properly.

In this stage, you're only going to back squat on squat days, as you need to get comfortable with the lift itself. You can monkey with the major exercises later. Same goes for the flat bench and the deadlift, though you're going to do what I suggested in the deadlift section and alternate six weeks of sumo deadlifting with six weeks of conventional. If you so choose, you can continue doing that as you go, just to keep the lift fresh and focus on developing your overall strength rather than strength in just one of the two styles. Once you've been lifting for 6-12 months, you can evaluate your progress and see which style best suits you.

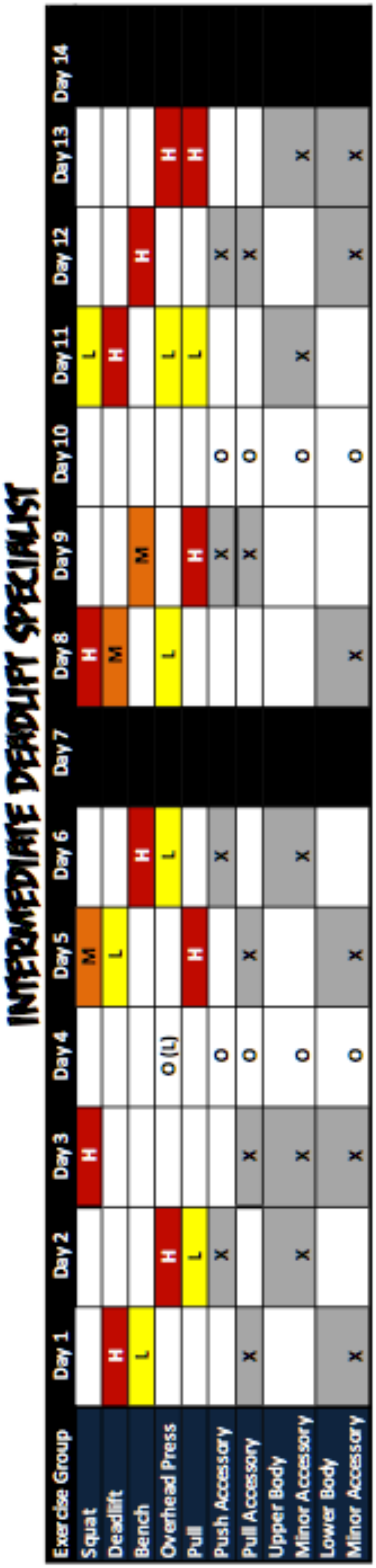
Exercise selection for each group:

- **Overhead Press**- Klokov Press or military press. No push presses. At this point, you need to develop raw strength. Explosive strength can wait at this point- just get strong on overhead pressing with no leg drive for now.
- **Pull**- For this, just use the bent over row form I mentioned in the deadlifting section.
- **Push Accessory**- Choose from skullcrushers, pushdowns, or dips.
- **Pull Accessory**- Choose from barbell or dumbbell curls, or chin-ups.
- **Upper Body Minor Accessory**- This can be anything from forearms to neck, done with higher reps. If something strikes your fancy and isn't going to totally destroy you, have at it. This should not be anything that is going to tax you significantly for subsequent workouts, however, and should be kept light.
- **Lower Body Minor Accessory**- Same deal. Things like hamstring curls, glute-ham raises, calves, etc, would go in this group.

I've not included abs in the workout because they're entirely optional. People will do them if they want and avoid them if they don't, so adding them into a program is pointless.

A note on getting good at pull-ups and dips:

STAY AWAY FROM THE MACHINE ASSISTED FORMS OF THESE EXERCISES. They are a crutch you'll never abandon. If you want to get good at these and cannot do them, the method for getting good at them is very simple. Every day, do whichever, or both, you want to do at the end of your workout, as a negative only. This means that for pull-ups you will jump to the top of the rep and lower yourself as slowly as possible. Same goes for dips. Start with sets of three and add repetitions as you can. Within a month, you will be doing multiple reps of each— I guarantee it.



INTERMEDIATE DEADLIFT SPECIALIST

Exercise Group	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Squat			H		M			H			L			
Deadlift	H				L			M			H			
Bench	L					H			M			H		
Overhead Press		H		O (L)		L		L			L		H	
Pull		L			H				H		L		H	
Push Accessory		x		O		x			x	O		x		
Pull Accessory	x		x	O	x				x	O		x		
Upper Body Minor Accessory		x	x	O		x				O	x		x	
Lower Body Minor Accessory	x		x	O	x			x		O		x	x	

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION FOR INTERMEDIATE DEADLIFT SPECIALISTS

So, you've chosen to be a deadlift specialist, eh? At this point, you should have 6 months to a year of heavy lifting under your belt and know your way around the gym. You're joining the legions of beastly-backed pullers who've decided to make the same decision, and are in fine stead. The program I've outlined here is a basic template based on what has worked for me in the past. It's not a static, dead document, but rather a living document like the government claims our Constitution is, though I hope you won't wipe your ass with this program the way our government does with that bit of 200 year old parchment.

Key for this chart:

H- Heavy. This, for you, is going to be 6-10 sets of 2-4 repetitions. Lest you worry you won't get to do singles, you will, but for the purpose of this chart keep it to the aforementioned. Always make sure you're picking a weight just below your rep max for the reps you've chosen. Thus, if you're going to do 10 sets of 2 and your two repetition maximum is 200 lbs, use 185 rather than 200. This will ensure that you get all of your reps. For these, you'll be using 85%-90% of your one repetition maximum, most likely. On your heavy days, feel free to choose from the programs I've outlined in the deadlift and squat sections as well.

M- Medium. For this, you're going to be doing sets of 4-6 sets of 6. Same weight choice as the above- use the weight with which you fail at 7 or 8. Likely about 75% of your 1RM, but that's not a hard and fast number. When you stop getting sets of 6, you're done with your sets. If you can do more than 6 sets of 6, rep out on one last set and increase the weight in your next workout.

L-Light. 3 sets of 8 for these. You're working form and getting in some volume, not trying to kill yourself with the weight. If you're feeling frisky on a light day and want to go nuts, pick a weight with which you think you can get 20 reps and do a single, all out set after warming up. I've done with 135 on the squat and got 79 when I weighed about 150, then hit 34 reps with 315 at a bodyweight of about 170.

O- Optional. If you want to lift on this day, go into the gym and get a light workout. This is a fuck about workout— it's not a kill yourself workout.

Exercise selection for each group:

- **Squat**- Stick to back squats on heavy and medium days, and front squats on light days if you want. At this point, you don't need jump squats or partials in your life. Just get good at the squat itself.
- **Deadlift**- Whichever form you like, use it.
- **Bench**- Stick to regular flat bench for the heavy and medium days, and mix in inclines or weighted dips on the light days if you want.
- **Overhead Press**- Klokov Press, behind the neck push press, military press, or push press to the front.
- **Pull**- Bent over row form I mentioned in the deadlifting section, weighted pull-ups, shrugs, high pulls, one arm dumbbell rows, or other free weight back exercise.
- **Push Accessory**- Skullcrushers, pushdowns, or weighted or unweighted dips.
- **Pull Accessory**- Curls, weighted or unweighted pull-ups, or (if you must) pulldowns.
- **Upper Body Minor Accessory**- This can be anything from forearms to neck, done with higher reps. If something strikes your fancy and isn't going to totally destroy you, have at it. This should not be anything that is going to tax you significantly for subsequent workouts, however, and should be kept light.
- **Lower Body Minor Accessory**- Same deal. Things like hamstring curls, glute-ham raises, calves, etc, would go in this group.

I've not included abs in the workout because they're entirely optional. People will do them if they want and avoid them if they don't, so adding them into a program is pointless.

After you've done this program for 6 weeks, you will do the following:

Day 1: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift with the form you've been using. Once you fail at a weight, attempt it three times, checking bar placement on shins and experimenting with small alterations to foot placement. If you get an attempt, add some weight and retry.

Day 2: Optional light workout.

Day 3: Work up to a top weight on the bench. Same deal as deadlift- attempt top weight three times. Make sure you have a spotter and take a handoff/liftoff.

Day 4: Work up to a top weight on the squat. Same deal as before. Make sure you set the pins at the bottom so you don't kill yourself, please.

Day 5: Off.

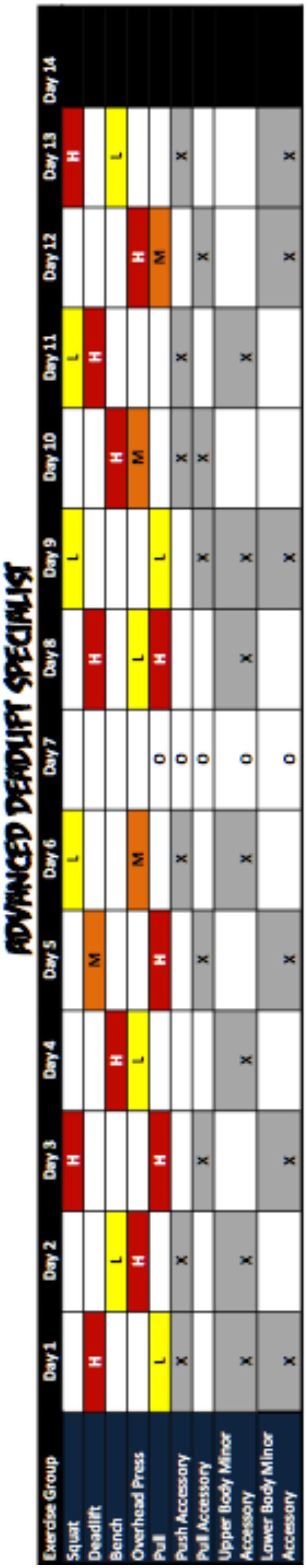
Day 6: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift with the form you've not been using for the past six weeks. If you feel like it, max on your favorite overhead movement as well.

Day 7: Off.

Thereafter, restart the program using the new maxes to determine your work set weights. If you had a previous max of 300 on the deadlift and were using 260 for sets of four, but just maxed at 315, add 10 to 15 lbs to your work sets. If you're not following, 315 is 105% of 300, and 105% of 260 would be 273.

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION FOR ADVANCED DEADLIFT SPECIALISTS

If you're advanced, I'm guessing you've got at least four years of heavy lifting under your belt, and your friends think of you when they need something heavy moved. As much of a pain in the ass as that is, it's time to step up your game and get to the point where they call you if they need one man to carry a refrigerator up six flights of stairs using tow straps to hold it on your back like an oversized rucksack.



ADVANCED DEADLIFT SPECIALIST

Exercise Group	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Squat			H			L			L		L		H	
Deadlift	H				M			H			H			
Bench		L		H						H			L	
Overhead Press		H		L		M		L		M		H		
Pull	L		H		H		O	H	L			M		
Push Accessory	x	x				x	O			x	x		x	
Pull Accessory			x		x		O		x	x		x		
Upper Body Minor Accessory	x	x		x		x	O	x	x		x			
Lower Body Minor Accessory	x		x		x		O		x			x	x	

Key for the accompanying chart:

H- Heavy. This, for you, is going to be 6-15 sets of 1-4 repetitions. We'll all have those days where we get carried away with singles and do two dozen sets, but try to remember that if you murder yourself with 30 singles one day, lifting is going to suck for the foreseeable future. Always make sure you're picking a weight just below your rep max for the reps you've chosen. Thus, if you're going to do 10 sets of 2 and your two repetition maximum is 200 lbs, use 185 rather than 200. This will ensure that you get all of your reps. For these, you'll be using 85%-90% of your one repetition maximum, most likely. On your heavy days, feel free to choose from the programs I've outlined in the deadlift and squat sections as well.

M- Medium. For this, you're going to be doing sets of 4-6 sets of 6. Same weight choice as the above- use the weight with which you fail at 7 or 8. Likely about 75% of your 1RM, but that's not a hard and fast number. When you stop getting sets of 6, you're done with your sets. If you can do more than 6 sets of 6, rep out on one last set and increase the weight in your next workout.

L-Light. 3 sets of 8 for these. You're working form and getting in some volume, not trying to kill yourself with the weight. If you're feeling frisky on a light day and want to go nuts, pick a weight with which you think you can get 20 reps and do a single, all out set after warming up. I've done with 135 on the squat and got 79 when I weighed about 150, then hit 34 reps with 315 at a bodyweight of about 170.

O- Optional. If you want to lift on this day, go into the gym and get a light workout. This is a fuck about workout- it's not a kill yourself workout.

Exercise selection for each group:

- **Squat**- Stick to back squats or partials on heavy days, then mix it up with whatever you like on light and medium days if you want. You should be good enough at the back squat that the variety will do you good.
- **Deadlift**- Whichever form you like, use it. Feel free to mix in deficit deadlifts and partials if you like. If you're doing partials, however, use conventional form. There's no sense at all in doing partials with sumo form.
- **Bench**- Stick to regular flat bench for the heavy days, and mix in inclines or weighted dips on the medium and light days if you want.
- **Overhead Press**- Klokov Press, behind the neck push press, military press, or push press to the front. Give whatever it is you're doing holy hell.
- **Pull**- Bent over row form I mentioned in the deadlifting section, weighted pull-ups, shrugs, high pulls, one arm dumbbell rows, or other free weight back exercise.
- **Push Accessory**- Skullcrushers, pushdowns, or weighted or unweighted dips.
- **Pull Accessory**- Curls, weighted or unweighted pull-ups, or (if you must) pulldowns.
- **Upper Body Minor Accessory**- This can be anything from forearms to neck, done with higher reps. If something strikes your fancy and isn't going to totally destroy you, have at it. This should not be anything that is going to tax you significantly for subsequent workouts, however, and should be kept light.
- **Lower Body Minor Accessory**- Same deal. Things like hamstring curls, glute-ham raises, calves, etc, would go in this group.

I've not included abs in the workout because they're entirely optional. People will do them if they want and avoid them if they don't, so adding them into a program is pointless.

After you've done this program for 6 weeks, you will do the following:

Day 1: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift with the form you've been using. Once you fail at a weight, attempt it three times, checking bar placement on shins and experimenting with small alterations to foot placement. If you get an attempt, add some weight and retry.

Day 2: Optional light workout.

Day 3: Work up to a top weight on the bench. Same deal as deadlift- attempt top weight three times. Make sure you have a spotter and take a handoff/liftoff.

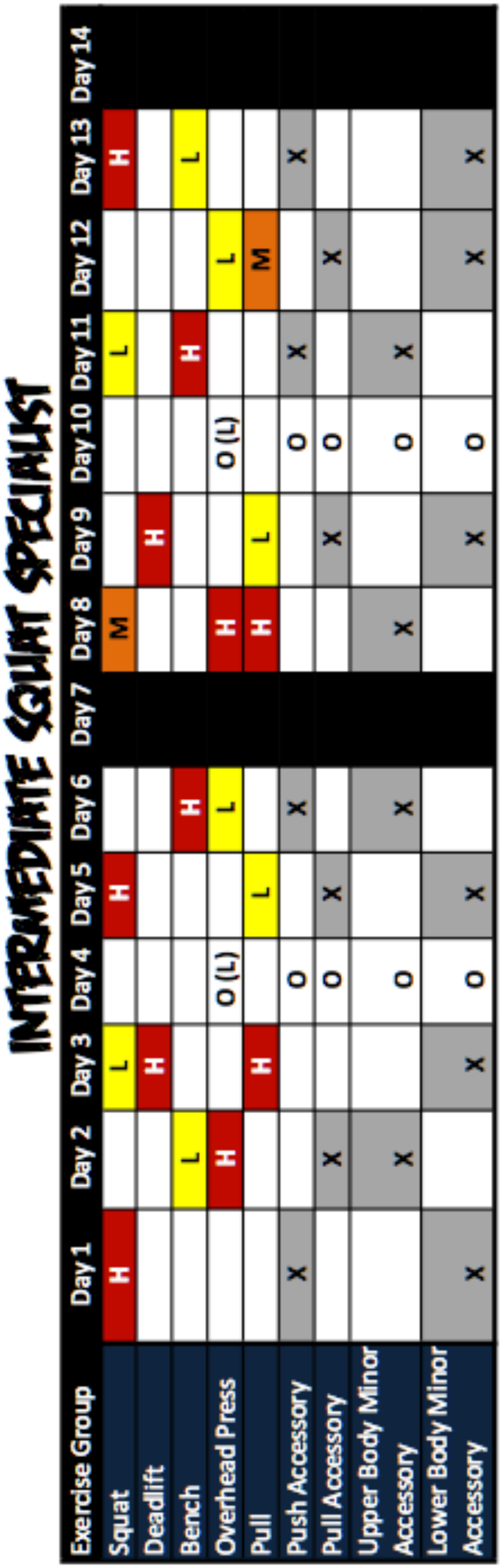
Day 4: Work up to a top weight on the squat. Same deal as before. Make sure you set the pins at the bottom so you don't kill yourself, please.

Day 5: Off.

Day 6: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift with the form you've not been using for the past six weeks. If you feel like it, max on your favorite overhead movement as well.

Day 7: Off.

Thereafter, restart the program using the new maxes to determine your work set weights. If you had a previous max of 300 on the deadlift and were using 260 for sets of four, but just maxed at 315, add 10 to 15 lbs to your work sets. If you're not following, 315 is 105% of 300, and 105% of 260 would be 273.



INTERMEDIATE SQUAT SPECIALIST

Exercise Group	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Squat	H		L		H			M			L		H	
Deadlift			H						H					
Bench		L				H					H		L	
Overhead Press		H		O (L)		L		H		O (L)		L		
Pull			H		L			H	L			M		
Push Accessory	X			O		X				O	X		X	
Pull Accessory		X		O	X				X	O		X		
Upper Body Minor Accessory		X		O		X		X		O	X			
Lower Body Minor Accessory	X		X	O	X				X	O		X	X	

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION FOR INTERMEDIATE SQUAT SPECIALISTS

Welcome to the esteemed club of squatting specialists! At this point, you should have 6 months to a year of heavy lifting under your belt and know your way around the gym. You're joining the legions of quadriffic squatters who've decided to make the same decision, and are in fine stead. The program I've outlined here is a basic template based on what has worked for me in the past. It's not a static, dead document, but rather a living being not unlike Jenna Jameson, although this program is far better looking in person than she is. Trust me— the broad looks like an alien in person. In any event, let's get on with the squatting, shall we?

Key for the adjoining chart:

H- Heavy. This, for you, is going to be 6-10 sets of 2-4 repetitions. Lest you worry you won't get to do singles, you will, but for the purpose of this chart keep it to the aforementioned. Always make sure you're picking a weight just below your rep max for the reps you've chosen. Thus, if you're going to do 10 sets of 2 and your two repetition maximum is 200 lbs, use 185 rather than 200. This will ensure that you get all of your reps. For these, you'll be using 85%-90% of your one repetition maximum, most likely. On your heavy days, feel free to choose from the programs I've outlined in the deadlift and squat sections as well.

s and Pain

M- Medium. For this, you're going to be doing sets of 4-6 sets of 6. Same weight choice as the above- use the weight with which you fail at 7 or 8. Likely about 75% of your 1RM, but that's not a hard and fast number. When you stop getting sets of 6, you're done with your sets. If you can do more than 6 sets of 6, rep out on one last set and increase the weight in your next workout.

L-Light. 3 sets of 8 for these. You're working form and getting in some volume, not trying to kill yourself with the weight. If you're feeling frisky on a light day and want to go nuts, pick a weight with which you think you can get 20 reps and do a single, all out set after warming up. I've done with 135 on the squat and got 79 when I weighed about 150, then hit 34 reps with 315 at a bodyweight of about 170.

O- Optional. If you want to lift on this day, go into the gym and get a light workout. This is a fuck about workout- it's not a kill yourself workout.

Exercise selection for each group:

- **Squat**- Stick to back squats on heavy and medium days, and front squats on light days if you want. At this point, you don't need jump squats or partials in your life. Just get good at the squat itself.
- **Deadlift**- Whichever form you like, use it.
- **Bench**- Stick to regular flat bench for the heavy and medium days, and mix in inclines or weighted dips on the light days if you want.
- **Overhead Press**- Klokov Press, behind the neck push press, military press, or push press to the front.
- **Pull**- Bent over row form I mentioned in the deadlifting section, weighted pull-ups, shrugs, high pulls, one arm dumbbell rows, or other free weight back exercise.
- **Push Accessory**- Skullcrushers, pushdowns, or weighted or unweighted dips.
- **Pull Accessory**- Curls, weighted or unweighted pull-ups, or (if you must) pulldowns.
- **Upper Body Minor Accessory**- This can be anything from forearms to neck, done with higher reps. If something strikes your fancy and isn't going to totally destroy you, have at it. This should not be anything that is going to tax you significantly for subsequent workouts, however, and should be kept light.
- **Lower Body Minor Accessory**- Same deal. Things like hamstring curls, glute-ham raises, calves, etc, would go in this group.

I've not included abs in the workout because they're entirely optional. People will do them if they want and avoid them if they don't, so adding them into a program is pointless.

After you've done this program for 6 weeks, you will do the following:

Day 1: Work up to a top weight on the back squat. Once you fail at a weight, attempt it three times, checking bar placement on shins and experimenting with small alterations to foot placement. If you get an attempt, add some weight and retry.

Day 2: Optional light workout.

Day 3: Work up to a top weight on the bench. Same deal as deadlift- attempt top weight three times. Make sure you have a spotter and take a handoff/liftoff.

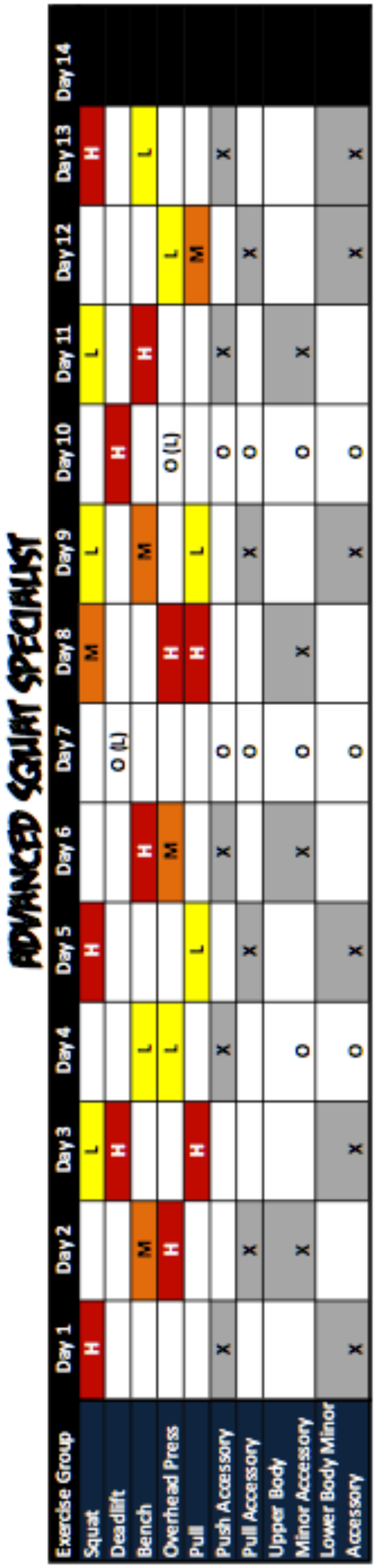
Day 4: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift. Same deal as before.

Day 5: Off.

Day 6: Work up to a top weight on the front squat. If you happen to be stronger at the front squat than the back squat, it's time to tinker with your back squat form. Additionally, max on your favorite overhead movement as well if you feel like it.

Day 7: Off.

Thereafter, restart the program using the new maxes to determine your work set weights. If you had a previous max of 300 on the deadlift and were using 260 for sets of four, but just maxed at 315, add 10 to 15 lbs to your work sets. If you're not following, 315 is 105% of 300, and 105% of 260 would be 273.



ADVANCED SQUAT SPECIALIST

Exercise Group	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14
Squat	H		L		H			M	L		L		H	
Deadlift			H				O (L)			H				
Bench		M		L		H			M		H		L	
Overhead Press		H		L		M		H		O (L)		L		
Pull			H		L			H	L			M		
Push Accessory	X			X		X	O			O	X		X	
Pull Accessory		X			X		O		X	O		X		
Upper Body Minor Accessory		X		O		X	O	X		O	X			
Lower Body Minor Accessory	X		X	O	X		O		X	O		X	X	

DESTROY THE OPPOSITION FOR ADVANCED SQUAT SPECIALISTS

If you're advanced, I'm guessing you've got at least four years of heavy lifting under your belt, and your friends think of you when they need something heavy moved. As much of a pain in the ass as that is, it's time to step up your game and get to the point where they call you if they need one man to carry a refrigerator up six flights of stairs using tow straps to hold it on your back like an oversized rucksack.

Key for the chart:

H- Heavy. This, for you, is going to be 6-15 sets of 1-4 repetitions. We'll all have those days where we get carried away with singles and do two dozen sets, but try to remember that if you murder yourself with 30 singles one day, lifting is going to suck for the foreseeable future. Always make sure you're picking a weight just below your rep max for the reps you've chosen. Thus, if you're going to do 10 sets of 2 and your two repetition maximum is 200 lbs, use 185 rather than 200. This will ensure that you get all of your reps. For these, you'll be using 85%-90% of your one repetition maximum, most likely. On your heavy days, feel free to choose from the programs I've outlined in the deadlift and squat sections as well.

M- Medium. For this, you're going to be doing sets of 4-6 sets of 6. Same weight choice as the above- use the weight with which you fail at 7 or 8. Likely about 75% of your 1RM, but that's not a hard and fast number. When you stop getting sets of 6, you're done with your sets. If you can do more than 6 sets of 6, rep out on one last set and increase the weight in your next workout.

L-Light. 3 sets of 8 for these. You're working form and getting in some volume, not trying to kill yourself with the weight. If you're feeling frisky on a light day and want to go nuts, pick a weight with which you think you can get 20 reps and do a single, all out set after warming up. I've done with 135 on the squat and got 79 when I weighed about 150, then hit 34 reps with 315 at a bodyweight of about 170.

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Exercise selection for each group:

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Day 4: Work up to a top weight on the deadlift. Same deal as before.

Day 5: Off.

Day 6: Work up to a top weight on the front squat. If you happen to be stronger at the front squat than the back squat, it's time to tinker with your back squat form. Additionally, max on your favorite overhead movement as well if you feel like it.

Day 7: Off.

Thereafter, restart the program using the new maxes to determine your work set weights. If you had a previous max of 300 on the squat and were using 260 for sets of four, but just maxed at 315, add 10 to 15 lbs to your work sets. If you're not following, 315 is 105% of 300, and 105% of 260 would be 273.

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APPENDIX A:

Unedited Andrey Belyaev *Squat Routine*

План тренировок МСМК Беляева Андрея
в подготовительном периоде
с 01.09. по 28.09.2008 года.

1 НЕДЕЛЯ с 01 по 07.09.

1 день (Утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рX1п,60% 4рX1п,65% 3рX4п (21)
2.Жим лежа средним хватом 50% 4рX1п,60% 3рX5п (19)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рX4п.
4.Наклоны ч/к 8рX4п. **Итого: 40 подъемов**

Вечер

1.Приседания 50% 4рX1п,60% 3рX1п,70% 2рX5п (17)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рX1п,60% 4рX1п,70% 3рX5п (24)
3.Широчайшие м-цы 8рX5п.
4.Пресс 10рX4п. **Итого: 41 подъем**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ: 81 подъем

2 день (вечер)

ОТДЫХ

3 день (Утро)

1.Жим лежа с цепями 50% 4рX1п,60% 3рX1п,65% 2рX5п (17)
2.Тяга стоя на подставке
50% 3рX1п,55% 3рX2п,60% 2рX4п (17)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рX4п.
4.Приседания в «глубину» 5рX5п. **Итого: 34 подъема**

ВЕЧЕР

1.Тяга с плинтов ниже колен

55% 3рХ1п,65% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ4п (18)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ2п,75% 2рХ5п (25)
3.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
4.Наклоны стоя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 43 подъема**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ: 77 подъемов

5 день (Утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,65% 4рХ4п (25)
2.Жим лежа в низ головой 50% 4рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,65% 4рХ5п (28)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рХ4п.
4.Пресс 8рХ4п. **Итого: 53 подъема**

(вечер)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
3.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
4.Наклоны сидя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 49 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:102 подъёма

6 день

1.Тяга с цепями 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,65% 2рХ5п (16)
2.Жим сидя под углом 3рХ5п.
3.Отжимания брусья 5рХ5п.
4.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс 10рХ4п. **Итого: 16 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА НЕДЕЛЮ:276 подъемов

2 НЕДЕЛЯ с 08 по 14.09.

1 день (Утро)

1.Приседания 50% 4рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 4рХ4п (24)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рХ5п.
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс 10рХ3п. **Итого: 46 подъемов**

Вечер

1.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ4п (20)
2.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ4п (24)
3.Жим лежа с цепями 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ4п (21)
4.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны стоя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 65 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:111 подъемов

2 день (вечер)

1.Тяга стоя на подставке 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,65% 2рХ4п (14)
2.Жим лежа с доски высотой 15см 60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ2п,90% 2рХ4п (20)
3.Отжимания на брусьях 4рХ5п. (с весом)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны ч/к 8рХ5п. **Итого: 34 подъема**

3 день (утро)

1.Тяга с 1-ой остановкой 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 2рХ2п,75% 1рХ4п (14)
2.Жим лежа вниз головой 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ4п (21)
3.Грудные мышцы 8рХ5п.
4.Пресс 10рХ4п. **Итого: 35 подъемов**

ВЕЧЕР

1.Тяга до колен 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ4п (17)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ2п,85% 1рХ3п, 80% 2рХ2п,75% 4рХ2п (31)
3.Тяга с плинтов ниже колен 70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ1п,85% 3рХ4п (18)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Трицепсы 8рХ5п. **Итого: 66 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:101 подъем

5 день (утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рХ5п.
4.Наклоны ч/к 8рХ4п. **Итого: 44 подъема**

ВЕЧЕР

1.Жим лежа   50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ4п (20)
2.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 5рХ1п,65% 3+6+4+8+5+7р (43)
3.Жим лежа   50% 5рХ1п,60% 5рХ1п,70% 4рХ4п (26)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс   10рХ3п.

Итого: 89 подъемов

ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:133 подъема

6 день

1.Тяга стоя на подставке 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,65% 2рХ4п (14)
2.Жим сидя под углом   3рХ5п.
3.Тяга с 2-мя остановками
50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 2рХ2п,75% 1рХ4п (14)
4.Отжимания на брусьях 5рХ6п.
5.Трицепсы   8рХ5п.

Итого: 28 подъемов

ВСЕГО ЗА НЕДЕЛЮ:407 подъемов

3 НЕДЕЛЯ с 15 по 21.09.

1 день (утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
2.Жим лежа   50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
3.Грудные м-цы   8рХ4п.
4.Наклоны ч/к   8рХ4п.

Итого: 49 подъемов

ВЕЧЕР

1.Жим лежа   55% 5рХ1п,65% 4рХ1п,75% 3рХ1п,85% 2рХ4п (20)
2.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ5п (20)
3.Жим лежа   50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ4п (20)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ4п.
5.Пресс   8рХ3п.

Итого: 60 подъемов

ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:109 подъемов

2 день

1.Тяга стоя на подставке 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 2рХ5п (16)
2.Жим лежа с доски 15см
65% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ1п,85% 3рХ2п,90% 2рХ2п,95% 1рХ3п
(19)
3.Отжимания на брусьях   4рХ5п.
4.Трицепсы   8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны ч/к   8рХ4п.

Итого: 35 подъемов

3 день (утро)

1.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
2.Тяга с 1-ой остановкой
50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ2п,75% 2рХ4п (20)
3.Грудные мышцы 8рХ5п.
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
4.Пресс 8рХ3п. **Итого: 47 подъемов**

ВЕЧЕР

1.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ1п,
80% 2рХ2п,85% 1рХ2п,80% 2рХ2п,75% 3рХ1п,
65% 5рХ1п,55% 7рХ1п (40)
2.Тяга 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ5п (19)
3.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
4.Наклоны стоя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 59 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:106 подъемов

5 день (утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ5п (22)
3.Грудные мышцы 8рХ4п.
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны ч/к 8рХ4п. **Итого: 49 подъемов**

ВЕЧЕР

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ2п,85% 2рХ3п (24)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ5п (22)
3.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 5рХ1п,70% 5рХ4п (30)
4.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс 8рХ3п. **Итого: 76 подъемов**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:125 подъемов

6 день

1.Тяга стоя на подставке 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 2рХ4п (14)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 5рХ1п,70% 5рХ5п (35)
3.Тяга с плинтов 60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ2п,90% 2рХ3п (18)
4.Наклоны ч/к 8рХ4п. **Итого: 67 подъемов**

ВСЕГО ЗА НЕДЕЛЮ:442 подъема

4 НЕДЕЛЯ с 22 по 28.09.

1 день (Утро)

1.Приседания 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ4п (17)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рХ4п.
4.Пресс 10рХ3п. **Итого: 44 подъема**

(Вечер)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ2п,85% 2рХ4п (26)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ2п,80% 2рХ5п (25)
3.Жим лежа с доски 15см
80% 3рХ1п,90% 3рХ1п,95% 2рХ2п,100% 1рХ3п (13)
4.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны ч/к. 8рХ4п. **Итого: 64 подъема**
ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:108 подъемов

2 день (вторник)

1.Тяга стоя на подставке
50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 2рХ4п (14)
2.Жим сидя под углом 3рХ5п.
3.Отжимания на брусьях 5рХ5п.
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс 10рХ4п. **Итого: 14 подъемов**

3 день (утро)

1.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
2.Тяга с 2-мя остановкой (ниже колен + выше колен)
50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ4п (17)
3.Грудные мышцы 8рХ4п.
4.Пресс 8рХ4п. **Итого: 39 подъемов**

(Вечер)

1.Жим лежа 55% 5рХ1п,65% 4рХ1п,75% 3рХ1п,85% 2рХ4п (20)
2.Тяга с цепями 50% 3рХ1п,60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ4п (21)
3.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ4п (20)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.

5.Наклоны сидя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 61 подъем**

ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:100 подъемов

5 день (утро)

1.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 2рХ5п (22)
2.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,75% 3рХ5п (27)
3.Грудные м-цы 8рХ4п.
4.Наклоны стоя 5рХ5п. **Итого: 49 подъемов**

(Вечер)

1.Жим лежа 50% 5рХ1п,60% 4рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 2рХ4п (20)
2.Жим лежа с доски 85% 3рХ1п,95% 3рХ2п,100% 2рХ2п,105% 1рХ3п (16)
3.Приседания 50% 5рХ1п,60% 5рХ1п,70% 4+6+8+7+5 (40)
4.Широчайшие м-цы 8рХ5п.
5.Пресс 10рХ3п. **Итого: 76 подъемов**

ВСЕГО ЗА ДЕНЬ:125 подъемов

6 день (вечер)

1.Тяга с плинтов 60% 3рХ1п,70% 3рХ1п,80% 3рХ2п,90% 2рХ3п (18)
2.Жим сидя под углом 3рХ5п.
3.Отжимания от брусьев 4рХ5п.
4.Трицепсы 8рХ5п.
5.Наклоны ч/к 8рХ4п. **Итого: 18 подъемов**

ВСЕГО ЗА НЕДЕЛЮ:365 подъемов